DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 065 077 HE 003 237

AUTHOR Showalter, Elaine, Ed.; Ohmann, Carol, Ed.
TITLE Female Studies: No. 4. Teaching About Women.
INSTITUTION KNOW, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa.
PUB DATE [71]
NOTE 87p.; Prepared for the MLA Commission on the Status of Women

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Opportunities; Females; *Feminism; *Higher Education; Sex Discrimination; *Womens Education; *Womens Studies; Women Teachers

ABSTRACT

This document on women's studies presents essays on the subject, a review of the special collections on women, and an annotated bibliography of materials dealing with women's studies and women's liberation. The essays presented include such topics as teaching about women, women in education, all male students and women's liberation, the feminist revolution in the classroom, and teaching of women's history. (HS)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

FEMALE STUDIES IV

TEACHING ABOUT WOMEN

Prepared for the MLA Commission on the Status of Women.

Editors: Elaine Showalter and Carol Ohmann

The MLA Commission on the Status of Women: Sidonie Cassirer, Mary Anne Ferguson, Elaine Hedges, Nancy Hoffman, Florence Howe, Carol Ohmann, Elaine Reuben, Elaine Showalter

KNOW, INC.
P. O. Box 10197
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232

IL 00 8 8 - 1

Production Staff:

Marjorie Johnson, Wesleyan University
Ella Kusnetz, Wesleyan University
Carol Ohmann, Wesleyan University

The MLA Commission on Women:

Sidonie Cassirer, Mount Holyoke College
Mary Anne Ferguson, University of Mass./Boston
Elaine Hedges, Towson State College/Maryland
Nancy Hoffman, Portland State University
Florence Howe, SUNY/College at Old Westbury
Carol Ohmann, Wesleyan University
Elaine Reuben, University of Wisconsin
Elaine Showalter, Douglass College/Rutgers University

CONTENTS

Introduction: Teaching About Women, 1971 i
by Elaine Showalter

Pittsburgh Diary: Reflection on USOE Institute; 1
Crisis: Women in Education
by Ruth Crego Benson

Teaching Women's Studies--Some Problems and Discoveries 9
By Wendy Martin

A Class of Our Own 14
by Nancy Hoffman

Up from the Podium: Feminist Revolution in the Classroom 28
by Barbara A. White

All Male Students and Women's Liberation 35
by Mary Tyler Knowles

Teaching Woman's History Experimentally 40
by Bryan Strong

The Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the 48
History of Women in America, Cambridge, Massachusetts
by Ann Douglas Wood

The Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College Library 52
Northampton, Massachusetts

Other Special Collections on Women in American Libraries 54

Special Collections on Women Writers in American Libraries 57

An Annotated Bibliography: Anthologies of Women's 60
Studies and Women's Liberation
by Ella Kusnetz and Carol Ohmann

INTRODUCTION: TEACHING ABOUT WOMEN, 1971

We were teaching about women before we had a name for it--a few women faculty members, particularly at women's colleges, were actually assigning material on women's history or the feminist movement, or looking at the treatment of women in literature as early as 1962. Black Studies, Chicano and Indian Studies, and Puerto Rican Studies provided a political and academic precedent, but the courses about women were not so easily titled. Women's Studies still reminds conservatives of home economics, and the misguided "womanly" curriculum. President Lynn S. White tried to impose on the unwilling undergraduates of Mills College: textile design, ceramics, and flower arranging. Female Studies, while more formal, carries that appellation Sarah Hale objected to so strenuously when Matthew Vassar founded Vassar Female College--"Why degrade the feminine sex to the level of animals," she wrote indignantly. Some women are beginning to speak of Feminist Studies.[1] Indeed, the direction of WS (as I shall call it) is not so clear that we can be sure it will end up separate; perhaps Gender Studies or Sex-Role Studies will come closer to the reality. Although a feminist perspective, and the broader kinds of awareness it leads to, is infiltrating the curriculum at many levels, I am concerned here only with those courses specifically designed to deal with women or sex-roles.

The range of definitions of WS gives some indication of the controversy surrounding its function in the university and in society. A general definition would point out the two basic purposes of WS: "to provide alternative ways of looking at women, and at the assumptions of our culture, including our sciences, and to provide new information about women, their history, and their accomplishments."[2]

> Yet for radical feminists, WS, "like Third World Studies, is the academic arm of a broader movement that is challenging time-worn assumptions about North American political and cultural standards--standards determined almost exclusively by Western European culture--WS is a political and academic endeavor and the two are inseparable. The courses should seek to awaken women to the realities of American society as well as to the reasons for their secondary status. They should also stimulate research in history, psychology, sociology, in order to rewrite the books that exclude women, or 'understand' them according to the myths propogated by Freud, Erikson, and the rest."[3]

Both these definitions minimize the insecurity and defensiveness of many professors entering this new discipline, constantly aware that academia's long trivialization of subjects associated with women presents an obstacle to serious

---

[1]See Marilyn Salzman-Webb, "Feminist Studies: Frill or Necessity," in Women and Education: A Feminist Perspective, University of Pittsburgh, 1971. Gerda Lerner is also using this term.

[2]Janice Law Trecker, "Woman's Place is in the Curriculum," Saturday Review. October 18, 1971, p. 84.

[3]Roberta Salper, "Women's Studies: Theory and Practice," NUC Women's Caucus Newsletter, April 7, 1971.

work, and even to the acceptance of WS by the university community. A more moderate, even apologetic note is struck in the section on women's studies in the brochure for the Barnard College Women's Center:

> Some say that courses on women are needlessly particularizing and parochial. Might it not be more appropriate to think of such courses as a rearrangement of familiar materials and an introduction of forgotten or neglected materials. Whether these materials occupy center stage, as in courses specifically designed to deal with the woman factor, or whether they are in varying amounts incorporated in existing courses, they heighten our awareness of a whole dimension of human life. Indeed, far from limiting our vision, these courses allow a more complete estimate of the range of human experience and accomplishment.[4]

The history of WS in the past few years explains this wide range of perspectives. For WS did not spring full-grown from the head of the Women's Liberation Movement; nor was it the daughter of the civil rights movement, or the youth culture, or the Free University Movement, although all of these clearly played a part in its development. When we realize that there were almost as many circumstances giving rise to the courses as there were courses, we may understand why there is no unifying ideology for WS.

The largest number of courses began because faculty members wished to teach them. In some cases, the faculty member was doing research on a topic relating to sex-roles or women. Many academic women now involved in WS had worked in other revolutionary movements. Some had been in Mississippi during the summer of 1964; many had studied and taught in Free University programs, or worked in the peace movement. Many were concerned with humanizing higher education, and bringing it into closer contact with social reality. However, the major thrust for most of these courses came from the Women's Liberation Movement and its effect upon academic women.

In a survey of WS, Rose Somerville notes that "the late 1960's saw women's caucuses at meetings of the American Sociological, the American Historical, the Modern Languages, the American Political Science, and other Associations." Radicalized by the impact of the new feminism upon their professions, and their own lives, women faculty began to see their disciplines in a new light, and to initiate courses which reflected their perspective. It was a group of women graduate students and faculty at Cornell which organized the 1969 conference on women; Kay Boals at Princeton designed a course on "The Politics of Male-Female Relations"; Annette Baxter at Barnard started teaching history of American women in 1966. At the first Congress to Unite Women, in December 1969, I participated in a group session on higher education in which I was the only faculty member actually teaching a course on women ("The Educated Woman in Literature," for Douglass College freshmen); in that group, however, were Ann Scott of Buffalo, now the Educational Vice President of NOW, and pioneer of the HEW suit; and Linda Nochlin of Vassar, who began that spring to teach seminars on women and art. We learned from each other and the word spread with amazing speed. Within a very short time WS has spread to a wide range of disciplines,

---

[4]Annette K. Baxter and Suzanne F. Wemple, "The Case for Women's Studies," The Women's Center, Fall 1971, p.3.

and established itself in the curriculum of a number of institutions. When the ideas could be spoken, the teachers were there, for unlike blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, or American Indians, women are already represented in the academic world in substantial numbers. In the modern languages, they constitute 37% of the faculties, and a whopping 55% of the graduate students. And long before women's liberation, they had noticed that female experience gets short shrift in the university, both in and out of class.

A second factor in the rapid growth of WS was the unique position of the women's colleges, most of which were deeply, and often reluctantly, engaged in its initial stages. By the late 1960's, the movement towards coeducation, a trend which had been increasing since the end of World War II, received a push from the decisions of Bennington and Vassar to accept men. Once mighty female fortresses, women's colleges had declined from their 19th century glory into pale imitations of men's schools, replete with male presidents, predominantly male faculties, and rebellious, if ladylike, students. A shudder was felt by women's colleges from Maine to Virginia as the rumor spread that half of Smith had applied to transfer to Yale, and that a tiny entering class of male students had taken over the Vassar student government. The unkindest cut of all came from the Women's Liberation Movement, in Kate Millett's witty attack, Token Learning (published in 1968 by NY NOW). Millett argued, and demonstrated, that women's colleges neither helped students overcome the discrimination of society, nor provided them with an educational experience equal to the ones available to their brothers.

Combined with the economic squeeze all colleges were feeling, this situation put a great deal of pressure on the remaining women's colleges to come up with a rationale for their continued existence. Women's studies, along with other elements of women's liberation thought, seemed like a natural solution. At Douglass College WS received administrative support as part of an overall redefinition of the college's purpose. At Barnard, a Women's Center, financed by an alumnae bequest, and headed by Catharine Stimpson, co-ordinates WS offerings, and other programs. At Radcliffe (now almost defunct as an institution separate from Harvard) and Smith, research collections on women assumed new importance. Other women's colleges were slower to accept, much less welcome, WS. Bryn Mawr students staged a sit-in to persuade the administration to hire Kate Millett. Catholic women's colleges, however, have been very responsive to WS; Alverno College in Milwaukee has established itself as a Midwestern WS center. Recent coeducation may have been a factor in the willingness of elite schools like Yale and Princeton to permit WS courses.

Student pressure, which has played a relatively small role in establishing WS to date, should be a much more significant factor in the next few years, as word of the courses spreads from campus to campus, and as alumnae of the courses seek to extend their knowledge. At several campuses, notably San Diego State College, Buffalo, Portland State University, student pressure has accounted for full-fledged programs. Coalitions of student, faculty, and staff groups on a number of campuses have established their own women's centers, which usually offer free university courses; these have frequently moved into the regular curriculum.[5]

---

[5]For a history of this process on one campus, see Roberta Salper's case study of San Diego State College, "Women's Studies," Ramparts, December 1971, pp. 56-60.

The development of academic structures related to WS has been correspondingly rapid. Fourteen regional conferences on WS have been held, including meetings at Tufts University, the University of Pennsylvania, Alverno College, Portland State University, and the University of California, Santa Cruz; in November 1971, a national WS conference was held at the University of Pittsburgh. Women's caucuses and commissions of the professional associations have established forums, groups and seminars for WS at their annual and regional meetings. Textbooks began to appear in 1970; and new publishing houses, such as KNOW, Inc., Source Book Press, and the Feminist Press began to re-issue primary material long out of print, and to commission and reprint the best recent work. Three scholarly journals devoted to WS have been announced and are scheduled to appear in 1972: Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal (ed. Wendy Martin, English Department, Queens College, CUNY, Flushing, N.Y.); Female Studies (ed. Ann Calderwood); and International Journal of Women's Studies (ed. Barbette Blackington, International Center for Women's Studies, Washington, D.C.).

I. Issues in WS: Men and Women

As increasing numbers of men become involved in WS as students and professors, and as women become more aware of their responses and reactions to each other, the necessity of examining the relationship of sex to the learning process becomes more and more apparent. In Female Studies II, and in the May 1971 issue of College English, a number of WS instructors commented on the problems of women teaching women. Florence Howe observes that "it is helpful for students to have before them a model of strong woman teacher-intellectual. At the same time, given the social conditioning of freshman women, a strong woman may arouse negative reactions."[6] Elaine Reuben (University of Wisconsin) has drawn attention to the lesson implicit in the fact of a woman professor discussing literature by male writers which denigrates the female intellect, such as Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover:

> The female teacher...directly or indirectly challenges Lawrence's assertion that she "thinks with her womb." Intellectually or emotionally, students can still retreat to the Lawrentian position that she is a perversion of her species, or to the more consciously ideological assumption that she is a special case,--but.... Nevertheless, a female voice in a female body reading and discussing Mellors' various catechisms cannot help but raise the "What do you mean, we..." question to some extent, and the very fact of a woman asserting her right to use the sexual vocabulary traditionally reserved to the male can be a small, but public, liberation from the very assumptions upon which the novel is founded.[7]

---

[6]"Identity and Expression: A Writing Course for Women," College English, May 1971, p. 864.

[7]"Feminist Criticism in the Classroom, or 'What Do You Mean We, White Man?'" Paper presented at the Midwest MLA Meeting, November 5, 1971.

Although experiences will vary, most teachers of WS recognize that female students are less confident, and less outspoken, than their male counterparts. The research of psychologists like Philip Goldberg and Matina Horner shows that women undervalue their own abilities and fear success as well as failure. Eleanor Maccoby's The Development of Sex Differences further documents the differences in intellectual behavior characteristic of boys and girls. To the feminist teacher, these differences are the result of conditioning rather than biology; but they exist nonetheless, and must be overcome. Even with sympathetic women professors, women students must struggle with their feelings of inadequacy and timidity. Comments from my students at Douglass College frequently reveal these feelings: "I do not like to talk in the classroom. I guess I still have the fear of saying the wrong thing." "I began this course with little confidence and I am leaving with an equal amount, neither more nor less. I seriously doubt that anything will ever increase my confidence in my abilities by very much." Or, on a more encouraging note, "I think I deserve an A in this course because before I took it I never would have had the guts to ask for one."

Women professors find that they must resist the inclination to recognize and support only those students who are already forceful and articulate. Professors, as well as students, find themselves forced to confront their own stereotypes about women. Often the silent women in the class are undergoing great stress. Helping them to find their tongues is a challenge to a teacher. Among the techniques which have proved useful are student diaries and journals, which allow shy students to test out their ideas in relative security and freedom; informal class meetings, with seating in circles or on the floor; consciousness-raising methods, such as having everyone comment on a question in turn; and, most of all, open discussion of the reason for women's difficulty in expressing ideas publicly. All of these are more easily achieved in classes or small groups which are all-female.

A second pattern is that of the woman professor teaching WS to male students. Mary Tyler Knowles's description of her course at Dartmouth in this collection brings in most of the problems of this situation, a particularly difficult one because its reversal of the social norms may set up defensive behaviors which preclude communication, and because male groups tend to reinforce competition and resistance.

Kay Boals (Princeton University) has distinguished three types of male students in her courses on the politics of male-female relations: traditionalists, whose "chauvinism is both blatant and very firmly held"; radicals, basically sympathetic to Women's Liberation, but concerned about "elitism" in the movement, and suspicious of "political organization among women as women rather than as members of another group whose oppression they recognize"; and moderates, who are willing to accept some evidence of discrimination against women, but feel threatened "by feminist challenges to their own life styles." Among the problems Kay Boals encountered were the difficulties of teaching such a heterogeneous class; "one risks massaging the prejudices of some while trying to undermine those of others." Differences of understanding and knowledge caused the women in the course to become bored or impatient with the men; some women withdrew from discussion because they felt the strain of representing Womankind. Most seriously, Boals writes, male students were unwilling to deal with personal experience and to become involved with the material other than intellectually:

"A number of factors are at work here, including male socialization away from feeling and toward intellectualization, the necessarily abstract analysis in most of the readings and lectures, and an understandable unwillingness to expose deeper levels of the self in a group of relative strangers."[8]

Such considerations make it clear that WS courses have an impact on the style as well as the content of the educational experience. Women professors must devise ways of helping male as well as female students to overcome those aspects of sex-role socialization which interfere with learning. My own experience teaching courses with both male and female students suggests that when the women are in the majority, the men will band together defensively, sitting together, and supporting each other's hostile remarks; but most of the women will attempt initially to befriend them, put them at ease, and minimize conflict. When the female professor in this situation behaves sympathetically to students of both sexes, resisting urges to demolish the men's arguments or retort sarcastically, students are reassured, and interaction improves; the men relax, and the women are less fearful, obsequious, and nurturant; freer to express ideas and to debate.

Although it may seem strange to consider male professors teaching WS to women, this pattern is initially more familiar, and in many ways, more comfortable, than the ones I have been discussing. After all, women are used to male authority, in the classroom as much as anywhere. Despite the trepidation of men undertaking such courses (see the essay by Bryan Strong), women students have not risen up and ousted them nor even strongly contested their authority. There is certainly a body of material which can be read and taught by either sex; and teaching WS may enlarge the range and sympathy of the male professor, as Fred M. Rivers (Towson State College) writes: "Teaching a course on women's history was a matter of personal benefit.... I have profited greatly by what I have learned, and I now castigate my colleagues for their ignorance.... What impresses me, beyond what so many women have long known, is that men suffer as much from ignorance about women as they do from an implicit sense of superiority. The sense of superiority depends, to some extent, in fact, on the ignorance." Probably male students will accept a critique of sex-roles more readily from a man.

Clearly if WS is to become an effective force in the university rather than an isolated and sterile phenomenon, its content and teaching style must reach male professors, and its ideas must affect the rest of the curriculum. Feminist perspectives require that we question not just the specific situation of a male professor teaching WS, but the entire relationship between the male professor and the woman student. Does male authority in this case encourage and reinforce female passivity? Do the attitudes of male professors influence women students' motivation and career choices, as one study at Stanford suggests? Can these factors be controlled or changed? All of us involved in WS will be struggling with these questions in the next few years.

---

[8]"On the Subtle Chauvinism of Princeton Males," Mademoiselle, April 1971, pp. 56, 110-112.

II. Issues in WS: The Classroom

As in other disciplines, teachers of WS differ widely on their views. Traditionalists see WS entirely as a new academic discipline, and are concerned with establishing its legitimacy in terms of research, lectures, papers, exams, and grades. Radical feminists see WS as a potential revolutionary force within the university and the society, and seek to develop new ways of learning which speak directly to women's special needs and experiences. Both views are represented in this collection, and the actual teaching of WS appears inevitably to present problems ideology could not anticipate. The most traditionally-structured courses encountered pressure from students who wanted other forms of participation; the instructors themselves were radicalized either by the difficulties of establishing the course at all, or the scarcity of available materials, or the intensity of student involvement, or the reaction of colleagues, or by all of these and more.

Those who see WS as a step towards a social revolution emphasize the need for innovation and difference, and warn of the dangers of imitating the elitism, dehumanization, competition and artificiality of male-dominated academia. Linda Gordon, of the Cambridge-Goddard WS Program, sees a need for a "radical feminist history," which is unlikely to come out of the present elitist, privileged, and competitive university environment. Nonetheless, our understanding of history from the viewpoint of the oppressed rather than the powerful, will require: "a history of birth control, of sexual reform movements, of child-raising, of women's work in their homes, of courtship...of general economic, political and cultural developments from a feminist point of view."[9] Another view is expressed by Ginny Foster, a community participant in the Portland State University WS Program, who argues that the priorities of WS must be "Freedom, survival, and satisfaction of basic needs," and that WS must become a total radical redefinition of education to be meaningful at all. "Better that we remain in slavery than to become like the masters. Better that we remain in the preserve of the 'culture of silence' than to speak in the tongues of men. In the biological metaphors that come so easily to women, it would be better for women's liberation to abort, than to have it delivered in the image of the dominant culture."[10]

In terms of teaching techniques and the atmosphere of the classroom, radical approaches to WS include collectivism, both in teaching and research; breakdown of the professional barriers between teacher and students; elimination of student competition in the form of domination of discussion and/or grades; and encouragement and acceptance of the personal and experiential. In the words of Gerda Lerner (Sarah Lawrence):

> Feminist Studies is ideally suited for breaking the artificial separation between theory and practice, learning and being. If what we are teaching really means, All women are sisters, then we must teach it in a classroom environment where competition is minimized and co-operation

---

[9]"Why Women's History," paper presented at AHA Convention, December 1970.

[10]"On Being 'Femmes de Lettres,'" unpublished paper, 1971.

> is stressed and rewarded. We should encourage anything that will detract from the homogeniety of the usual classroom and encourage a diversity of ages and educational levels among the students. The sharing of thoughts and questions among students of different age levels, among the single girl, the young married and even the older woman and mother, is in itself educational. When dealing with this subject the assignments can easily be structured in such a way as to encourage the cooperation of two or more students in carrying them out. This has a marvelous effect on learning, and in no way impairs the stress on solid work and academic rigor; on the contrary, students become authentically involved and have much more motivation for solid work than they usually do. Faculty members who work in an interdisciplinary Feminist Studies program can contribute to breaking down the artificial hierarchies and vertical slots of the usual academic structure.[11]

In order to encourage openness of discussion, and to break away from the traditional academic structures which radical feminists perceive as dehumanizing and one-sided, WS professors have experimented with small consciousness-raising groups, and with open classrooms. Almost all large courses have discovered the need for small groups (see Martin, Strong). Interestingly, a few courses moved toward communal atmospheres, including sharing meals before class-meeting. Isabel Welsh (UC, Berkeley) reports that her politics class had great success when they tried meeting for dinner; "Although the informality and spontaneity of personal discussion at a meal is difficult to recapture in a classroom discussion with 35 students, there is a carry-over ethos from the supper to the class." At Goddard and at Portland State, living collectives evolved out of WS course experiences.[12] In short, both students and teachers in WS have wanted more intimacy, trust, and openness than college classes usually permit, and have been willing to devote considerable time to achieving the atmosphere they need.

With extremely varied student populations, WS has been forced to find ways to provide common experiences for students, as well as give them information. Young women must be made aware of the experience of old women, or of men, or of poor women, while males must obtain a genuine sense of female experience. Exercises in experience have been varied and ingenious, drawing upon all the resources of the university and the community. Students have done content analyses of women's magazines, advertising, and television; seen films on natural childbirth; visited day care centers, Planned Parenthood, and elementary schools; participated in experimental theatre groups, playing the roles of the opposite sex; filmed prostitutes in New York, and mothers in suburban playgrounds. In Robert Meredith's course on women in America (University of California, Davis), students designed projects like the following:

---

[11] "On the Teaching and Organization of Feminist Studies," unpublished paper, 1971.

[12] Marilyn Salzman-Webb (Goddard) recommends that living and study collectives be a required part of the educational process; see "Feminist Studies: Frill or Necessity?" in Women and Education: A Feminist Perspective, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1971.

> "Spend an average day or two taking very careful notice of 1) how men treat you, 2) how women treat you, 3) how you treat women. Women, do you like other women, or merely feel threatened, or bored? Are you proud because you hang around with men, watching the exciting things they do? What is a groupie? Men, do you take women seriously? Do you expect them to carry their own weight or do you encourage coyness? Do your female friends have female friends of their own? Draw some connections."[13]

Discussions can be intense and emotional. The cumulative effect of the literature is in itself powerful; frequently students become depressed by the weight of historical evidence of women's subjection. Reading Sylvia Plath's poetry, and Kate Chopin's fiction can be almost traumatic for sensitive women students who see their own lives spelled out in this tragic literature. Men and women both feel threatened and defensive doing analysis of sex-role patterns which they are not entirely ready to abandon. Conflicts between conservative and radical students, or between students and professors, may become overt; and such a situation is particularly alarming to women who have been socialized to repress and avoid conflict.

Yet virtually all participants in WS testify to the extraordinary degree of learning which takes place. The relevance of the material, the varied and imaginative assignments, the excellence of the reading, the vitality of the discussions, and the special atmosphere of human understanding and concern make these courses very special; motivation and performance are high. Comments from student evaluations in WS courses at Douglass College show how deeply undergraduates involve themselves in this work: "This semester has been a turning point in my life..."My feelings about myself and my own potential have changed" ..."should be required of all students." Florence Howe reports that students at the University of Pittsburgh found a vision of "struggle and courage" in the history of women, even though it is largely a "slave history." Asked whether they were depressed by the reading, one replied "certainly not.... We're angry that we had to wait until now--after so many years of U.S. history in high school--to learn the truth about some things." Another added "But it makes you feel good to read about those tremendous women way back then. They felt some of the same things we do now."[14]

With increased experience, professors are finding ways of re-investing the emotion generated by WS. Mary Anne Ferguson (English-University of Massachusetts/Boston) reports:

> One of the problems in teaching "The Images of Women in Literature" is fighting the depression which builds up as the essentially negative reflection is documented in story after story; even women authors

---

[13]"Draw Some Connections," in American Women and American Studies, ed. Betty E. Chmaj, Pittsburgh: KNOW, Inc., 1971.

[14]"Sexual Stereotypes Start Early," Saturday Review, October 16, 1971, p. 94.

> offer little hope as they show women wasting their lives tied to worthless men or driven to suicide by the very awareness that such a course is trying to develop. One can try to substitute anger for depression, but the problem of channeling the anger constructively remains.

She recommends several works which represent women positively: Tillie Olsen's "Tell Me a Riddle"; Willa Cather's My Antonia; Susan Glaspell's "A Jury of her Peers"; and Muriel Spark's The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. "Studying several works of this kind can help students realize that liberation involves hard choices; that it begins and ends with the self; that self-knowledge depends upon contact with the real world. Anger can be funneled into action, reinforced by others' anger instead of being fruitlessly dissipated."

A recent development in WS is its spread to adult education, and to professional curricula, including social work, law, and home economics.[15] Mary Louise Willey (Boston Center for Adult Education) reports that adult education students are highly motivated, and can handle heavy reading, although they tend to be resistant to discussing their own lives. Sheila Tobias (Wesleyan University) found home economics students at a midwestern state college very interested in an interdisciplinary approach to the problems of female personality. Ruth Crego Benson's article in this collection tells what happened when a group of female and male educators from all over the country spent an intensive summer session studying women in higher education. It appears at this time that the prospects for WS methods and ideas spreading throughout the educational system are good.

III. Issues in WS: Politics

There are two aspects to the question of the politics of WS. The first has to do with ownership and control. Will feminists be able to decide who teaches WS courses, and how? Or will WS be absorbed and co-opted by the university? Roberta Salper has described the struggles at San Diego State over control of a Women's Studies Program which owed "its existence to pressures from a political movement centered outside the campus." Two forces tended to weaken the radical potential of the program: foundation support, leading to leadership struggles and to serious questions of priorities and course content; and an internal debate over creation of a separatist female culture, the equivalent of the drop-out counter-culture. Salper argues that WS must resist both these forms of co-optation, and concentrate on real political action:

> Women's Studies Programs have the potential for developing into bases for the acquisition of knowledge and skills and development of cadres for the Women's Movement. The next step--the most difficult and crucial one--is linking the university-based programs with other areas in the society. That is, forcing the educational institutes

---

[15]For a description of many of these professional WS courses, see Female Studies III, ed. Carol Ahlum and Florence Howe for the MLA Commission on the Status of Women, Pittsburgh: KNOW, Inc., 1971.

> to allow sectors outside the university to use and benefit from their resources, and thereby creating what should be the ultimate goal of Women's Studies: a broad-based movement aimed at creating real social change.[16]

Most teachers of WS do agree that their courses should include women of varied ages and backgrounds, women who come in from the surrounding community, who bring new ideas in with them and at the same time take advantage of the resources of the university. Yet implementing this goal is frequently difficult. Although there are some elite universities (Princeton, for example) that allow community residents to audit lectures free of charge, and some colleges (Barnard, for example) that extend this opportunity to their alumnae, most schools make it very difficult for older women to participate in courses, either by charging high auditors' fees, by refusing to accept non-matriculated or part-time students, or by stipulating background requirements. In addition to the older women who are regularly registered as undergraduates, WS courses even now can usually include faculty wives, occasionally women employees of the college. But in the opinion of many teachers and students, this is not enough.

One solution to the impasse is a WS program with a field-work component. Although there is still debate over the structural relationship of WS to the curriculum and over how WS should be administered, whether as courses within departments, as a program, or as a separate department--it seems likely that women will need to establish some separate programs in order to carry out a number of important innovations: work with community agencies, counselling, day care, liaison with women in the community, and political action.

A second issue in the politics of WS is the purpose of the courses as viewed by the instructor. Florence Howe has distinguished five areas of emphasis in WS:

1. Research
2. Rediscovering and reinterpreting women's culture
3. Compensatory education
4. Raising consciousness
5. Changing the status of women in society[17]

Of course, these emphases would tend to overlap for any given teacher. But there will be differences in content and method between those instructors who are primarily concerned with giving their women students a positive self-image and the courage to overcome their conditioning; and those instructors who view the graduates of WS as a potential revolutionary force. Perhaps there is a continuum which will emerge as we gain experience, so that, for example, new

---

[16]"Women's Studies," Ramparts, December, 1971.

[17]From the forthcoming Academic Women on the Move, to be edited by Alice Rossi.

research on women will work to improve compensatory education, so that the rediscovery of women's culture will work to change the status of women in society.

Perhaps the main question we can ask about WS in 1971 is whether it is developing for the benefit of women, or continuing to exploit them. Some basic distinctions can be made between male scholarship which exploits feminist concerns for "timeliness" (e.g. the Sixth Annual Medieval Conference of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, SUNY/Binghamton, scheduled for May 1972 on the subject "The Role of the Woman in the Middle Ages," 5 out of 6 papers by men; the annual meeting of the American Studies group in MLA, December 1971, on child-rearing, with both papers by men; the special issue on the family of the Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Fall 1971, with all the articles by men); and scholarship by committed men and women: for example, Glen Petrie, Gail Parker, Ann Wood, Lois Banner, Carroll Smith Rosenberg, Catharine Stimpson, Pauline Bart, Elaine Hedges.[18]

As the essays in this collection demonstrate, teaching about women means total involvement: importing life and struggle into the classroom; creating new relationships between students and teachers, urging ties between study and action.

Elaine Showalter

---

[18]See Petrie, A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler, NY: Viking, 1971; Parker, Introduction to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years & More, NY: Schocken, 1971; Wood, "Fanny Fern and the 'Scribbling Women:' Why Women Wrote," American Quarterly, Spring, 1971; Banner, "On Writing Women's History," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Fall, 1971; Rosenberg, "Militant Women and the Jacksonian Era," American Quarterly, Fall, 1971; Stimpson, "Thy Neighbor's Servant, Thy Neighbor's Wife," in Woman in Sexist Society, NY: Basic Books, 1971; Bart, editor, special issue of Journal of Marriage and the Family, Summer, 1971; Hedges, Introduction to Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Yellow Wallpaper, NY: Feminist Press, 1971.

PITTSBURGH DIARY: REFLECTIONS ON U.S.O.E. INSTITUTE CRISIS: WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by Ruth Crego Benson

When Konnilyn Feig and her colleagues got money from the federal government's Office of Education for an institute on women in academia, they should have been congratulated for an uncommon achievement. For even to the people who think that funding inter-planetary rock collecting is perfectly normal, it is still considered curious for women to ask for something for themselves, openly and without embarrassment. Once the project was funded, an incomparable staff plunged into months of intense preparation, including the definition of goals and objectives, the careful selection of speakers and topics, and the time-consuming, often painful, choice of participants. The purposes of the Institute as outlined in its prospectus were three: to develop an understanding of the women's movement; to develop teaching methods and curricular models in women's studies; to develop strategies for structural change and workable models for affirmative action beneficial to women. Finally, the work bore fruit, and on Monday morning, June 14, about thirty-five people gathered in a dismal room on the twelfth floor of Pitt's Cathedral of Learning for twenty-eight days of talks, discussions, films, special projects, and mutual inspiration on what to do about women in higher education.[1] In the process of publicizing the Institute, the staff had sent letters to university presidents, requesting them to nominate members of their academic and administrative staffs who could best use the Institute's action-oriented program. In other words, staff members who control money and directly influence university policy. Such persons are usually male, of course, but since the instinctive reaction of any president would be to send a woman to such a program, the participants were mainly females, who by and large held positions that were not so directly influential as anticipated.

This should come as no surprise. Nevertheless, in responding to the questionnaire that accompanied their applications, many participants had written in sometimes gruesome detail not only about their awareness of the problems that women face in academia, but their attempts to solve them. What they had accomplished--without power and without money--was both surprising and inspiring. Yet the final pool of participants represented varying degrees of feminist-political sophistication, and was as diverse as possible in kind of institution, job category, geographical area, color, personal style, and priorities.

After we had been introduced to one another and our sessions had begun, it did not take long for conflicts to materialize and points of view to become identified and anticipated. In fact, on the first day the participants and

[1]Because of the reprisals experienced by feminists active at the University of Pittsburgh (see, for example, Pitt's University Times, June 24, 1971), it is unusually necessary to emphasize that the opinions in this paper are mine and do not reflect any other purpose than to express my own personal reactions to this Institute. A forthcoming book and film on the Institute will represent a far more comprehensive, collaborative, and objective effort.

their spouses who had brought children to Pittsburgh protested the Institute's policy (in accordance with federal guidelines) of not providing child-care, or child-care subsidy. Naturally, at other government institutes, child-care has never been an issue, because the men who usually attend them, as well as the men who write the guidelines, are not responsible for child-care in their homes, and assume that they can rely on their wives' unpaid services during any professional meeting. Had there not been this problem at this particular Institute, these guidelines would never have been officially challenged as they were when the Office of Education's representative (male) visited the Institute.

Yet these debates on child-care were disturbing. In fact, the arguments about child-care reveal the least revolutionary and most parochial thinking of all debates in the current movement--even when elaborated by feminists who think of themselves as radical. I think the reason for this is simply that the brainwashing of women to feel guilty about delegating child-care is more effective than any other. For the first time in discussions of this kind, I heard a naked statement of this guilt, stripped of the usual rationalizations and modifying language. A woman who was very anxious about the care her children would receive in Pittsburgh said simply "What right do I have to do my own thing while my children may be bored" (as if parents were never bored while their children are doing <u>their</u> own thing).

In debating the kind and quality of child-care that is needed in this country (and that was needed locally at the Institute) women as yet have gone no further than to transfer the family situation--with its sex-determined roles and responsibilities--from the home to the institution. This approach is designed not to free women but to make them feel doubly anxious and doubly guilty.

Not only is the current ideology destructive of women, it is also deeply parochial. Although we in the movement give lip-service to a diversity of life styles, when it comes to formulating policies and deciding on strategies for change, we have uppermost in our minds women who are married with children. That is, even we feminists tend to perpetuate the norms that have oppressed us all. Over and over again at the Institute, we had to coach ourselves to defend and anticipate not only our personal choices, but the choices of all our sisters--now and in the future.

One of the more depressing episodes was our session with members of "high school women's liberation." I had looked forward to talking with these young women who had, I thought, seen the light much earlier in their lives than most of us at the Institute had. But, as this session went on, it became painfully clear that these bright students did not really know much about women's liberation and were incredibly unaware of how they--as females--had been short-changed by their high school experience. Incredibly, that is, because these young women thought of themselves as enlightened and had labelled themselves as women's liberationists.

We asked, for example, if they thought the curriculum was male-oriented. "Oh, no," they replied. Incredulous, we asked how many women writers they

read and what they had learned about women in history. As they groped for names and failed to find them, it visibly shook them to realize that they had not, in fact, read women writers and, except for the Betsy Ross syndrome, had not learned much about women in their history classes.

As far as their futures were concerned, they said they were convinced that they could "go it alone," that they did not need any groups or organizations, that all they needed to do was be smart, do good work, and insist on their rights as individuals. Sex discrimination does not really exist, women fail because they're not good enough or get distracted into marriage and family. We were stunned; mostly because we could hear ourselves as high school students saying things just like that--but also from a gloomy sense of defeat.

However understandable, the unnecessary and pointless alienation of the black and women's movements from each other was perhaps the most intransigent of the problems discussed at the Institute. From the beginning of this second wave of feminism, women have made it clear that the movement cannot exclude any one, and that its success will depend on the participation of all women--black and white. And from the beginning, most blacks have not only rejected the movement's relevance to them, but have publicly denounced it. (The reasons for this have been endlessly documented, and need no further discussion here.) And yet, black women are in the movement; and even black women who are most hostile to feminism, find it impossible to avoid discussing it. And no one talks that much about something which is not a live issue for her. So that even unsympathetic debate testifies to the cogency of this issue to all black women.

But public meetings in which black women and men can freely denounce the women's movement--knowing that white women and men will not respond just as freely--have gone on long enough. To be sure, white diffidence is not the blacks' problem, and I think we can do a few specific things to ease this situation for the present. On their part, blacks could stop heaping contempt in public on a movement about which they seem to know so little. If blacks must attack, let it not be out of ignorance. And white women can easily stop using analogies to the black situation, no matter how tempting and how relevant. (I do not mean that the connection between sexism and racism in this society should not be discussed, but only that the "You wouldn't dare say that to a black" parallel should be eliminated.) It will be far more difficult for white women to speak their minds and not be manipulated into silence by guilt and fear.

Blacks and women will, hopefully, find some way to cooperate, for these two movements, aside from possible collaboration in the future, serve another important function for one another. For an ironic disadvantage of our being underprivileged groups is that our opponents do not provide the kind of criticism that is useful, that can sharpen and define our thinking and our actions. Both movements are therefore going to have to provide their own criticism and analysis--as we managed to do at our best in Pittsburgh.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The women had to fight their way from the start and took more than one hour in making the first ten blocks. Many of the women were in tears under the jibes and insults of those who lined the route. At Fourth Street progress was impossible. Commissioner Johnson called upon some

> members of a Massachusetts National Guard regiment to help clear the way. Some laughed, and one assured the Commissioner they had no orders to act as an escort. (From a newspaper account of Alice Paul's mass march on Washington in 1913, quoted in Eleanor Flexner's Century of Struggle.)

For centuries men have used equally the threat of physical violence and the withholding of protection to keep women in their place. And for centuries women have not been able effectively to respond to this threat. Therefore, the bodily eviction of a male intruder at the Institute was one of our most satisfying and spectacular achievements.[2] The absurd conviction of the unwanted visitor that he should automatically have the right to sit in on our sessions is not important here. (All sessions were open only to speakers, participants and their spouses, and staff.) In fact, he is not important at all. It was the women's response to his challenge that was history-making.

After we had all voted to request the intruder to leave, and had done so politely but firmly, he announced that he would not. With this refusal, a momentary but absolute silence fell over the group. I am positive that we were all thinking exactly the same thing: What on earth do you do with a man who simply refuses to go? Visions of our historical sisters bathed in streams of icy water, dragged from voting booths, undergoing forced feedings, flashed before my eyes. At that moment, four or five women of different ages, colors, and ideological persuasions, converged swiftly and purposefully on our intruder, lifted him wordlessly from his chair, and deposited him gently outside.

Through the swift, quiet, gentle act of this small brave band of women, we had all responded to the challenge of raw male power. Given the violent history of that challenge, the wonder was not that this intruder had found "hostility at feminist institute" (The Pitt News), but that he had found so little.

Yet the hostility of men toward feminists in academia is usually not expressed in raw violence, but in the condescension and paternalism that characterized the presentations of most of our male speakers. Not only did they implicitly and explicitly question our intellectual and political sophistication, they seemed to doubt even our knowledge of simple facts and procedures. Reminding us of the crippling handicaps under which we work, they repeatedly told us that what we really need are "apprenticeships," positions just subordinate to the lofty ones which only men with "skill" and "experience" can really handle.

Where do they think we've been all these years? Ironically, these benevolent patrons were in many cases themselves recruited directly out of fields or occupations that had nothing whatsoever to do with the academic jobs which they were deemed "qualified" to occupy. Choice words of advice from these experts included such gems as: "Attitudinal change is a waste of my time and anybody else's." "Women can get more done gently." "Women should be placed only in jobs where they're likely to succeed." (All direct quotes.) Many of us have had the only

[2]For a typically biased account of this incident in The Pitt News see Appendix.

reaction to this kind of statement that is reasonable and to the point: Women do not need the right to succeed. They need the right to try, and to fail; to be just as ordinary--without penalty--as most of the men who are considered their superiors.

Perhaps the crudest but most honest remarks were made to us informally during a cocktail party at which the members of the Institute met several of Pitt's administrators and faculty members. This is a sample from a conversation I had with the man who doles out financial aid to students:

RCB: Do you accept scholarships which are limited to males or females?

Money Man: Of course. A person has a right to make any kind of requirements for distributing his own money.

RCB: So you'd accept money earmarked for a center for the extermination of Jews?

Money Man: Well, you may have a point.

(Several minutes of conversation about women in which this man reveals total ignorance about their status, etc.)

RCB: Say, you don't seem to know a whole lot about this subject.

Money Man: No, I don't.

RCB: Well, why don't you read something, or talk to somebody about it?

Money Man: Do you really want to know why? I'm not interested. (Without embarrassment.)

This kind of hostility is bad enough, but becomes even worse when translated into actual reprisals. The harassment, firing, laying-off, and demoralizing of feminists by universities is well-documented by now. At the University of Pittsburgh itself, for example, in the cases of seven women who had charged such action, HEW found that two had been harassed by the university specifically because of their involvement in feminist activities.[3]

Throughout our sessions, we discussed time and time again how to combat this intransigent problem. Women must demand that grievance procedures be built into every affirmative action program; that grievance committees with enforcement powers at all institutions be set up for women students and faculty alike to deal with any kind of sexist or discriminatory treatment. They must furthermore demand that every action taken for, against, and about them be accompanied by a written record of such action and be entered into their permanent dossier. They must themselves carefully record conversations, interviews, names, and dates in their own professional records. This can help to weaken the immunity a university creates by conducting so much of its business "off the record" and by couching all of its letters and reports in innocuous academese. Finally, we must dare to publicize tirelessly the inequities that plague us.

Other issues that we have yet to think through and that provide the rich and exciting debates of the movement for women in higher education were

[3]See above, note 1.

summarized by the director in her remarks that closed our sessions: Just who or what is the enemy? What strategies and resources are available to us? What should the pace of change be? Do we concentrate on attitudes or actions?

And just how do we want our institutions to change? Some of the women asked if we should attack our universities at the very moment when they are feeling such pressure from other groups and are often in grave financial trouble. My own feeling is that any institution which has so grievously failed such numbers of women as the university should not survive unless it changes radically. Are we, after all, indebted to the university to the extent that we must condone its continued blatant and unpenalized discrimination? This terribly complex question places only the out-groups in a schizophrenic position. The white educated male knows perfectly well where his loyalties lie, whereas the rest of us know that we gain very little either from the university's survival in its present form or its destruction.

What did the participants think of the Institute? What had we learned or contributed that we could carry away with us and use in the future? We all had a chance to express our delight, horror, joy and dismay, at an open evaluation session, chaired by Mr. Paul Carnell[4] whose official duty it was to investigate and evaluate the Institute's strengths and weaknesses in situ. Most of the weaknesses cited by the participants had to do with specific technical problems of the day-to-day running of the Institute or were criticisms of specific sessions and speakers. One of the more curious of the broader charges was that the Institute was "too woman-oriented." (The three male participants, by the way, had physically isolated themselves on the periphery of the group by the end of the four weeks. They were almost literally up against the wall, said almost nothing, and two of the three were among the first to leave, even before the closing session.)

On the positive side, the participants were eloquent and generous with their praise. They claimed that their political awareness had grown and sharpened; that their commitment to the movement had been reinforced and some claimed to have a genuine feeling of commitment for the first time. They were particularly keen to express a new feeling of power and self-confidence, based on new information, new ideas, and, especially, a feeling of group solidarity. Among the most moving statements were those of a young student-participant who said that for the first time she had had a chance to see women doing "what she'd like to do." And many women repeated simply that the four weeks at the Institute had "changed their lives."

Much harder to define was how we would actually use our new information, ideas, and confidence to change our home institutions, particularly since the point had been made over and over again that the Institute was action-oriented. Almost everyone had made a commitment to institute or expand a program of courses in women's studies. Many people were going to be involved in affirmative action at home. But it was disconcerting to know that while we were gaining expertise in affirmative action at Pittsburgh, college administrators were themselves conferring on strategies to prevent or emasculate affirmative action. Counseling was an area of great concern to many of us--especially after the session with

[4]Assistant Director, Division of College Support, Bureau of Higher Education, U. S. Office of Education.

the high school students. The need to involve community women in all of our activities was deeply felt, although how to do it without paternalism and condescension remains a problem, probably to be solved only locally. Seminars, workshops, symposia, and conferences are being planned. Perhaps the most promising of all the plans for the immediate future was the opportunity for one of the participants to write a new philosophy for her college. Although it is a feminist philosophy written for a girls' junior college, it would serve equally well for any institution.

Yet, although we felt optimistic as we left Pittsburgh, our goals and our conviction that we can accomplish them were tempered by an often unspoken but deep realism. For none of us underestimate the power and the resources of our opponents, who see little to gain and much to lose in giving us what we deserve. The challenge will be to prevent our realism from turning into the exhaustion that forced our historical sisters to pin their hopes on a single goal--and ultimately to lose.

417 Main Street
Portland, Connecticut

APPENDIX

Thrown Out

The Pitt News July 1, 1971

Administrator Finds Hostility At Feminist Institute

by EVAN PATTAK
Associate Editor

For Dr. Charles Montgomery, it has not been a banner year.

Almost before the ink was dry on his appointment to the position of Dean of Student Development, the office was abolished.

Now, Montgomery can add to that blow to his pride a pain in his posterior. Last week, he was bodily evicted from a meeting of the U.S. Office of Education Institute, Crisis: Women in Higher Education.

As far as Montgomery or anybody else knows, this was the first time a University administrator has been quite literally thrown out of a meeting. He was still "quite surprised, quite disgusted" about the incident Tuesday.

Liberalism Affronted

"This is absolutely contrary to the principles of a free and open society, a liberal university," he said.

Montgomery said his motives for attending the meeting were honest — he wanted to hear the women's grievances. According to a terse, 98-word memo issued by the Institute, attendance at Institute meetings is limited to "participants, staff, and speakers." On the basis of this policy, Montgomery was asked to leave.

He did not.

"If there were a legitimate reason," explained Montgomery, "I would gladly have left."

Two Versions

The discussion began and picked up momentum. "One of the participants," reads the memo," then chaired the discussion. A motion was made to request that Dr. Montgomery leave. The motion carried by majority vote with no opposition."

Again, Montgomery refused to budge.

"Finally," says the memo," Dr. Montgomery was approached by several Institute participants and removed from the room."

Montgomery's description of the eviction is more graphic: "Four or six women very gently lifted me off the chair—I was very limp and they had to bear the full weight of my body. They picked me up and dropped me in the hallway."

Montgomery said he had no doubts about who was behind his precipitate exit — the one who ". . . chaired the discussion", Institute Director Dr. Konnilyn Feig.

Montgomery said the incident came about "mainly as a personal vendetta" between him and Feig. He claims Feig exploited her position as temporary chairman to issue an "emotional speech", and that she "used" Institute members for "political" purposes.

"It would be naive to think that this (personal animosity) did not play a part," said Montgomery.

There may be something to Montgomery's explanation. If it is an Institute policy to limit attendance at its sessions to participants, staff, and speakers it is an inconsistent one. At least one outsider has attended at least one previous meeting.

Cool Relations

And the cool relations between Montgomery and Feig are no secret.

Institute members will not elaborate on their cursory memo. They said they feel that the unanimity of their vote relieves any single participant of individual responsibility for bouncing Montgomery.

Still, one must wonder just what is going on at the Institute that must be guarded so zealously. "Perhaps they thought I was a spy from Chancellor Posvar," mused Montgomery.

Perhaps that would be a good idea-send a spy into the Institute to steal its secrets for the waiting world.

Unless he got caught. If the penalty for eavesdropping is a quick hook, the sentence for treason could be a hasty dispatch.,

TEACHING WOMEN'S STUDIES -- SOME PROBLEMS AND DISCOVERIES

by Wendy Martin

In the spring of 1971, the Honors and Interdisciplinary Division of Queens College agreed to sponsor and fund a course in "The Feminist Movement" which I had proposed the year before. The course was designed to provide an intellectual, social, and historical framework for feminism as well as to provide an in-depth presentation of the issues of Women's Liberation. Since it was the first time such a course was taught in the College, I felt that it was extremely important that it be intellectually solid, especially in view of the fact that most of the faculty and administration were skeptical, or at best, suspending judgment.

On the other hand, the students were very enthusiastic about the course -- the 150 seat room was filled to capacity, and there was a long waiting list. Although I was obviously pleased to have such dramatic support, I hoped that the course would channel their zeal from sloppy sloganeering to a more thorough understanding of the public and private issues of feminism.

In order to be as comprehensive as possible, I decided to invite both scholars and activists to lecture on such topics as Women's History, Women in Literature and the Arts, Women and Psychology, Women in Politics, Abortion, Day Care Centers, and Alternate Life Styles. The final roster of speakers consisted of approximately thirty women who are teaching in nearby colleges and universities such as Columbia, New York University, Douglass at Rutgers, Fordham, and Princeton and well-known leaders of groups such as Radical Feminists, National Organization for Women, Red-stockings, and Radical Lesbians. Several women painters and poets whose work is nationally respected were also invited. The format may seem excessively ambitious, but I decided that it was better to be guilty of intellectual overkill than to run the risk of being accused of academic anemia.

In order to achieve continuity, my lectures and introductions either provided background or a contemporary context for the guest lecture. For example, I discussed the history of abortion and contraception prior to the talk given by women working actively with New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal. Conversely, in order to supplement the historical lecture on theories of feminine psychology, I talked about more recent speculations on the subject by radical feminists such as Shulamith Firestone, Ann Koedt, Mary Jane Sherfey, and Germaine Greer.

In addition to attempting to strike a balance between past and present, I spoke briefly about the most important books listed in the bibliography for the course. All of the students were required to read Kraditor's Up From the Pedestal and to choose eight additional works from approximately one hundred books I had placed on reserve in the library. Each student also kept a journal in which reactions to the speakers and feelings about the course were expressed; the journal provided a record of the students' changing consciousness and provided me with insights into the ways in which I could adapt the course to their needs.

The other written assignments consisted of brief portraits of nineteenth and twentieth century feminists together with a representative selection of their ideas taken from letters, journals, essays, lectures or tracts. I held individual conferences to help students make their choices, often suggesting less well-known feminists such as Crystal Eastman or Voltairine de Cleyre. The portraits plus selections were placed on file in the library as a source of supplementary information for the class and for general campus use.

The final project was completely open-ended; it could be an individual or group project, a standard term paper, or tapes, movies, art work, political activity, or guerrilla theatre. The journal and the final project were intended to give the students a chance to relate the course to their individual interests, while the reading evaluation and portraits of nineteenth and twentieth century feminists provided a more traditional framework.

Most of the students seemed to feel that the work load was fair, and they particularly enjoyed the freedom permitted by the final project; their final efforts ranged from taped interviews with Queens housewives, abortion counselling, and Day Care Center work to an analysis of the phenomenology of sex from a lesbian perspective, and a film collage on the images of women. One group of students set up a Women's Center on campus, another group organized a campus conference on feminism at which Betty Friedan spoke, and a group of older women set up a recruiting and special counselling program to interest community women in the Adult Continuing Education program on campus. Others did a content analysis of nineteenth-century feminist newspapers and discovered the advantages of collective scholarship as well as connections between the temperance and suffrage movements. Another student contributed a comparative study of the differences in men's and women's attitudes toward death (apparently, women tend to prefer death to living as a vegetable while men tend to want to survive no matter what; more women would rather die gently in their sleep while men choose more violent means such as guns and knives).

On the other hand, there were students who thought that the work load was excessive and that I was authoritarian and repressive to make such heavy demands on their energies; they had thought that the course would focus on their personal experiences and hoped that it would be more of a rap session. Arguing that it was very unliberated of me to make formal demands on them, they labelled me elitist, establishment, and excessively academic about the Woman's Movement. For a brief time, I felt guilty about the "rigid" structure of the course and then realized that to revise my expectations of the students would simply be a capitulation to what I consider to be the shortcomings of "movement psychology"--namely, lack of discipline and perspective.

Since I was teaching the course, in part, to give feminism academic legitimacy, I expected the students to work as hard for it as any other course and to take it as seriously. Since the schism was never entirely bridged, I decided, in order to avoid later confusion and resentment, to make it very clear to this year's class in the beginning of the semester that the course was not primarily a rap session. However, since there was definitely a need for informal discussions, the class was divided into groups of five to seven for consciousness raising and more personal discussions; these small groups were extremely interesting and provided the necessary balance for the large lectures.

The lecture sections were of great importance to most of the students. Many of them observed in their journals that they found the range of personalities and interests of the speakers very stimulating, and were able for the first time in their lives to identify with professionally accomplished women who were active in the world (most Queens students come from conventional middle class backgrounds and still live at home for financial reasons). I was especially gratified that the course succeeded in providing role models, because I still remember all too vividly the scarcity of women, much less women with whom I could identify, on the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, where I was an undergraduate.

By the end of the semester, many students dramatically revised their expectations of themselves; as they began to perceive the possibility of leading more self-actualizing lives, they began to plan careers and think about life goals that went beyond housewifery. On the other hand, the men students began to think about making career choices that were not traditionally "masculine" such as primary school teaching.

Many students were radicalized by having to write a portrait of a nineteenth-century feminist; singly and together, they searched the shelves of the Queen's College Library, their local libraries, and finally the New York Public Library and discovered that there was very little information available on many of the most important feminists. When they were able to locate materials such as letters, diaries, autobiographies and tracts, they discovered that in addition to being improperly catalogued, these materials were left to crumble in an obscure corner. Slowly, the students began to see the subtle chauvinist bias that affects the pursuit of knowledge; they began to understand that our institutions cater to the interests of men, and that history reflects the priorities of men. Surprisingly, the men students were most outraged by this sexist influence on the distribution of knowledge, probably because this was the first time they confronted it on a very practical and immediate level. I think that the research project did more to convince them of the importance of feminism than any other aspect of the course; needless to say, I was delighted that such a traditional assignment could have such a revolutionizing impact on their psyches. The class decided that their research on feminists was a form of "compensatory scholarship," and it was they who suggested that the library make the material permanently available to the entire campus.

The course had a few special problems that I had not anticipated; for example, I didn't realize that the discomfort of the men, who comprised about 20% of the enrollment in the course, would be as acute as it was. One male student wrote in his journal that he was excluded entirely from the discussion in his small group and that the exclusion had a devastating effect on him--not only did he feel self-conscious and awkward but insignificant and stupid as well (a familiar experience to most women). All of the men mentioned that they felt self-conscious about entering the classroom, and one student observed that in the early weeks of the course, the men invariably arrived late, often noisily, and sat in the back of the class. As the semester progressed, they arrived in groups and moved to the center of the room. This phenomenon proved to be especially significant when the Radical Lesbians addressed the class.

The Radical Lesbians refused to speak with men in the audience, and, since the representatives from Gay Liberation who were supposed to meet separately with the men did not arrive, the men in the class refused to leave the room when requested. Sitting together, they argued that they didn't think that it was fair to be excluded from the official class, that excluding them was a blatant form of sexism; after all, they argued, if women were so outraged by male chauvinism they should refrain from responding in kind. It is important to note that the session was not originally structured to exclude the men, but the failure of the Gay Liberationists to appear placed the person who took charge of the class for me that day (I was lecturing on women in literature at the Graduate Center) in a difficult position--she decided to try to settle the issue democratically whereupon a fierce battle ensued.

The women in the class accused the men of being boorish and insensitive by failing to cooperate; the men insisted that they were merely defending their rights as so many feminists before them had done, and so it went until the session turned into a screaming and shouting match, all of which was recorded on the tape; finally, after fifteen chaotic minutes, all but three of the men agreed to leave. After an additional ten minutes of confusion, a few of the Radical Lesbians along with several of the women students bodily removed the men from the room--I was told that the men were engulfed, lifted up and carried out of the room. I'm quite certain that for most of the women, it was the first time in their lives that they succeeded in getting what they wanted through force, and I'm sure many of them felt exhilarated.

While the women continued the class, the men went to the Dean's Office, the Honors College, and the campus newspaper to protest; by the time I arrived on campus the next day, the class was a campus cause célèbre, and I had a monumental public relations problem to solve. I suggested that the incident could be used as a lesson in the nature of power politics and scheduled a special meeting to listen to the tapes to attempt a more rational evaluation of the event.

As a result of the special session, the class concluded that exclusion was not constructive, but, given the extenuating circumstance of the Gay Liberationists' failure to appear, the men should have been more cooperative. Since the ousting of the men reversed the usual power structure, the women felt that it was good for the men to experience powerlessness, especially physical powerlessness. The women also felt that in the early stages of consciousness raising, the perception of men as the common enemy tended to bind women together and helped them to identify with other women rather than diffusing their energies through a false identification with men (it is, of course, a sociological and psychological truism that groups become more cohesive when they have a common enemy--the Puritans relied on Satan to perform this function, whites on blacks, fascists on Jews, capitalists on communists and so on). However, it was agreed that the dynamics of this situation arise from weakness rather than strength, that women should not put men down in order to put themselves up. The class also concluded that women should not repeat the mistakes of other disenfranchised groups, that they should concentrate on non-hierarchial distribution of power--a sharing across rather than a reshifting of the traditional dominance/submission patterns. It was also agreed that

women should concentrate on understanding and developing their own resources in order to achieve a positive identity and that feminist courses could help them to develop healthy self-images.

In general, the course was considered successful, not only by the students but by the faculty and administration as well. The campus now has an intense interest in feminism; in fact, it could be said that it is presently an intellectual fad, and there are days when it seems that every course is focusing on the woman problem. I simply hope that next year and the year after the interest in feminist issues will be as intense--and, eventually, that there will be no need to sensitize students and faculty to sexism on campus and in the culture because there won't be any.

Queens College

A CLASS OF OUR OWN

by Nancy Hoffman

Women know there are real questions about female experience that we neither ask nor answer in classes where male professors preside and male students dominate. In my two years teaching a course called "Literature by Women," first at The University of California at Santa Barbara during the bank-burning season, and next at Portland State University during the year of gay liberation and an unhealthy, disturbing campus quiet, I learned some things useful for myself and, I think, for students and teachers who see the women's movement as a true barometer of social change, and thus as a hope-filled and painful crisis in our intellectual and personal histories. My own emotional and intellectual growth has been so much linked to the burgeoning of women's studies, that as I go on to describe and then to analyze this past year's work, my real, unanswered questions might be considered a paradigm for women's studies. In women's classes taught by women, we have begun to recover our past and to understand its paradoxical nature. The past serves both as a millstone and as a source of strength for our evolving consciousness.

What are the special dynamics of a women's class? As a university teacher I've had my quota of experiments with student-run classes and open classrooms; I've been a member of a free, store-front high school community (and have gotten my students into Renaissance pastoral literature through hip films like Alice's Restaurant and Easy Rider). These metamorphoses of teacher, student, classroom, and school are mildly better than what's been before. Usually, the primary questions for discussion are: what is a school? how do we learn? In the first few classes of "Literature by Women" both in Portland and Santa Barbara those discussions went on in elaborate detail, then stopped abruptly. Structure, format, even grades (to grade, or not to--the classical free classroom question) became not quite irrelevant, but simply bureaucratic matters to be settled quickly so that real work could go on, work on the woman as short story writer, work on images of the female body in Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton, work on the distinction between madness and mental illness, work adapting Virginia Woolf's Orlando for a class presentation. In short, in my women's class something seemed alive and right. Although I felt continually a tension in myself because I wanted us to be more critical readers of poetry, because I yearned for us to draw some conclusions at the end of a session, because I sought more clarity in the poise we attained between Self and Subject, undeniably an intellectual energy had been released in the class; we were real students, rare among undergraduates, rarer among teachers. Thus, I'll try to sketch the quality of a women's class, and indicate the power its vicissitudes had over our lives. In some cases, I'll speak in the voice of a student in the women's movement; in others, I'll admit my own struggle forward and the accompanying reflexive retreat to the secure academic tradition in which I was nurtured, approved, and lovingly taught by intelligent male professors.

The following is an account of our worst but in some ways most revealing class during winter term at Portland State. In a Student Union meeting room

of this largely white, urban university one Tuesday evening, a group of about forty women and a few men have begun to gather. Most, including myself, the teacher of this weekly class, wear the uniform of liberation--pants, boots, a casual shirt, but among us are several women over thirty, and some younger, who have arrived in work day clothes of school teachers, mothers, computer programmers, nursing students. All these students are entangled with one another, now having struggled three weeks with challenging personal questions about women and literature. Serious conversations continue as a young woman student meets everyone at the door and gives her a number designating the small group she belongs to. One woman, enormously pregnant, takes what must be a terribly uncomfortable seat on the tile floor; another, clutching crayons, coloring book, and stories tries to settle two pre-school kids at a table in the hallway. I announce that next week we'll listen to Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday and add that tonight's class, to be presented by a student work group, on the theme of Lesbianism has been many hours in preparation. Though interrupted once by screams from the hall--and re-organization, "The campus pigs say the kids can't stay there, but I found some yippies to take care of them" --class proceeds: the mother of the children and another woman read passages from Volume One of The Diary of Anais Nin, choosing selections which deal directly with female homosexuality. One is particularly striking. Anais speaks to Henry Miller of her love for his wife June:

> I said, "If there is an explanation of the mystery, it is this: the love between women is a refuge and an escape into harmony and narcissism in place of conflict. In the love between man and woman there is resistance and conflict. Two women do not judge each other. They form an alliance. It is, in a way, self-love. I love June because she is the woman I would like to be. I don't know why June loves me." (p. 41)

The presentation takes five minutes of our three-hour class, including interruptions and the repetition of each passage. Disconcerted by this brevity, and desperately aware that I care more about this women's class, and its power to change our lives, than I have about any other, I ask a third student, Judy, to say why her consciousness had been so radically altered over the course of several weeks in which she had been a member of the work group making the presentation to the class, among whom were several women who were frank and open about being gay. But Judy, justly embarrassed by being put on the spot and angry at me, takes the safest route. "I can't; we'll talk about it in small groups. It's too personal." At which point five groups of 5-8 students separate, and go off to smaller rooms in which they will hold their rap sessions on Nin and Lesbianism.

After an hour's attempt at discussion in my own small group, it becomes apparent that three conditions prevail: some students have not really thought about Nin; others think that only homosexuals can discuss their own experience, as only black women have license to discuss their particular feeling of oppression; still others remain in a state of shock, stupefied that female homosexuality exists at all. I have talked with some enthusiasm, not specifically about homosexuality, but about Nin's self-image and delicate analytical consciousness, but the deadness has become excruciating. Literary critical terms seem absurd, and a subterranean chasm, opened by Nin's unbearable truthfulness, seems to have

left the students speechless. I make a unilateral decision to call the whole class together in order to compare experiences. Universal complaint. We can't talk about Lesbianism; we won't "do" literary analysis. The previous class on Doris Lessing had been lively, even full of revelation because in a joint student-teacher presentation the structure of The Golden Notebook had been explicated as a paradigm of Lessing's anti-ideological but superbly controlled world view. "We can deal with complex ideas; why this mindless disaster?" I ask evidently angered and uncomfortable. "We'll end up speechless, isolated lumps if the uniqueness of personal experience prevents us from generalizing, from seeking patterns in our lives and ideas. Here, we have a chance to experience Ourselves and the Other through literature. You only know male literary analysis--stale, not touching life. This class is not simply a personal rap group--except that ideas should be personal. God knows, we'll drown in our own experience." Bad feelings. This class was going to be different.

On Friday the Lesbian literature group meets with me again to talk it out. What had happened? We come to several fascinating but disturbing conclusions which have little to do with usual academic failure. First, we had been victims of a revolution of rising expectation; because they had been responsible for organizing the class, because of their intense commitment to the women's movement, because of their opportunity to counter school's sterile intellectualism, the Lesbian literature group had unrealistic expectations of themselves and the class. Indeed, they and I had been paralyzed by an unfulfillable desire to explode our ideas. In T. S. Eliot's phrase, we had grasped for "a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a re-creation of thought into feeling"; we had wanted to "re-associate" sensibility by unifying our personal and intellectual loves as a bulwark against the hostility we felt from the fragmented, male world. Instead, we had become inarticulate. We wanted to do so much, that we had done nothing. Second, we had neglected an issue to which we should have been most sensitive from our experience in the women's movement. The close supportive relationships we had with each other could either alienate outsiders, or allow them to experience instinctive, womanly warmth. In this case, the women in the Lesbian literature group were perceived by other class members as the initiates, the ruling clique who had single-mindedly seized the class for proselytizing rather than for studying literature. We had thus neglected a principle of good teaching, which is to hear with another's ears, to provide adequate guidance and support for one's audience. We had not considered the innocent student who "needed" a night class and found herself in ours. Third, we had, in part, obliterated literature by stopping at the perennial Movement questions which are simply first questions: can I identify with this writer? does she relate to me? We should have answered, then moved on to ask, what does her experience mean if it is not mine? how do I define my own choice of consciousness except by comparison with alternative ones?

A fourth reason why our class on Lesbian literature seemed such a new unsettling world did not emerge in our post-mortem session, but became clear to me as my own unlikely friendship with a woman faculty member deepened, as she and I began to include in our talks of novels and poems, our experience at elite graduate schools where we were fattened, then sold at the block to the patriarchs of English departments. We excitedly exchanged women's articles,

and found ourselves forgetting the names of our male colleagues while remembering lines of Sylvia Plath. We discovered that we had wanted to integrate our male-trained intellects with our womanhood, and found that these halves did not make a whole, and never had. The alternative was a hearty, sometimes uncomfortable and threatening feminism that mocked at the female helping role as Plath had in "The Applicant," where the hand of a prospective husband is filled by a woman "willing/ To bring teacups and roll away headaches/ And do whatever you tell it." Our own alliance made us see that any women's program that is not simply an obedient second-class replica of the dominant male mode must be feminist to make the difference between women's studies as a door to professional careerism for faculty and to "relevant" (hip) courses for students, on one hand, and the exploration of female human freedom, on the other. Not only were we making a class together <u>about</u> literature, but the very core of our subject forced us to integrate our presence in that room as insecure, questioning, sometimes frightened students with our sexual identity as women.

Nin had said: "the love between women is a refuge. . . two women do not judge each other. They form an alliance." She had suggested that we face each other, and learn together not solely as students, but first as women capable of loving each other. But we had always exhausted our emotional energy in literature by loving fictional heroes, and in life by loving men. Could we love each other? Could we even manage to sustain a complex discussion together without the masculine presence? Who knew about relationships between women anyway? Women we knew, talked to each other at length, but, of course, about men, not about literature or each other. Nin's female alliance threatened to annihilate my crucial and confused alliances of the past, to shake me into a raw, primary dependence on women who had been simply students I cared about before, and to force me to make a step toward valuing myself and other women intellectually as I had valued men. The Lesbianism class forced me to recognize how difficult it is to re-make oneself, to identify oneself wholely as female. I was forced to conclude that one step toward female identity can be achieved by a measure of separatism.

Years ago when I didn't go to Bryn Mawr it was because, thinking I was not too bright, I decided I needed the stimulation of manly precision and logic that one found in co-ed classes; secretly, it was because, knowing I was superior to most women, I needed superior intellectual companionship--men. One simple antidote for such a characteristic Catch 22 is, without arguing for sexual separatism ultimately, to say right now women need to be literally an overwhelming majority of any women's studies class. In all my women's classes we've had a ratio of about seven women to one man; more and we really feel their presence in a counter-productive, judging, not allying way, even when they don't say much. I use the word "feel" deliberately, to underline just how sensitized even young Movement women are to the challenging male way of being in the world, and to the silent, disconcerting pleading of Movement males--"Tell me I'm O.K. Tell me I'm not a sexist," or alternately, and more current, "Tell me I am sexist. I want to say <u>mea culpa</u>." Nor for literary questions do we want, even silently, to be always asking comparatively: could a man have written this, but rather, to ask cleanly and deliberately what does this woman say? This is hard, for as Sally Kempton put it so succinctly, the male enemy has established outposts in our heads. Our women's classes must set their own

standards freely. We must ask ourselves what we need to know, what brings us the pleasure of revelation and invention, but not by disposing of precision, rationality, logic, all of which are dependable, non-mystical tools in any human discussion. We all hear the taint of that self-fulfilling prophecy: women are illogical, bound only by emotion. I think the teacher of a women's studies class must not mask a lack of intellectual discipline or logic by saying that discussions just happen, nor should she accept an excuse couched in movement rhetoric: only bourgeois male intellectuals need an argument with shape and coherence. To make sense of anything, most of all our personal experience, the patterns of our female lives, we must recognize causality, sequence, the shadings of meaning which unfold as we write and speak.

Bringing thought qualities of conflict and focus to light are rules of thumb for any teacher who wants a lively class, and a sense of accomplishment, of having learned something. For example, I remember a seminar at my selective graduate school; the subject to be discussed--Shakespeare's Sonnet 129: "They that have power to hurt, and/ Will doe none...." Immediately, a student formulated the question: was Shakespeare's intention to render unattractive virtuous strength and beauty? We hastened to take our posts, to choose up neatly ordered sides, because we and the professor wanted, and believed we could produce, an answer with coherent, supportive arguments, wrapped, tied up, ready to carry away to our orals committees or our essays. We never thought of experiencing the poem, of letting it get inside us, or us inside of it, or if we did, we didn't talk about it.

But once our classes are dominated by women, the absence of what is mistakenly called male logic or intellectual combativeness plays itself out in an absence of conflict and focus disconcerting to those of us brought up in the university.

But let me describe a Women's Studies class on poetry some weeks after our discussion of Nin. Sylvia Plath, because of her pained American girlhood, her madness and eventual suicide at 32, and the crystalline piercing quality of her poetry, has become an awe-inspiring, revered figure for the women's movement, she who asks whether the choice <u>is</u> between creativity and life. In class I had re-phrased that question by invoking R. D. Laing's theoretical and philosophical work on schizophrenia in <u>The Divided Self</u>. I had compared Plath's recurrent image of living "under the same glass bell-jar, stewing in my own sour air," with Laing's notion of "ontological insecurity," one form of which he defines as the attempt to deny relatedness with other human beings because, if one experiences both the world and the self as unreal, "the main manoeuvre to preserve identity under pressure from the dread of engulfment is isolation." I had gone on to suggest that Plath's frenzy of creativity seemed an attempt to keep herself from drowning by preserving a kind of "relatedness" to society. Particularly her sequence of poems about bee keeping shows amazement at and fascination with social relatedness. She asks of insect society in "Wintering," "Will the hive survive." But her poems were already a shield or bell-jar and led her into deeper isolation from love and humanness. By contrast, I suggested that Anne Sexton, whose latest collections called "Live or Die" and "Love Poems" we had also read, seemed clearly moving outward; the healthy woman experiences the self as real, "unsour"--"I am not what I expected. Not an

Eichmann./ The poison just didn't take."--then she reaches toward her lover--"how we gnaw at the barrier because we are two." What, I asked the class, had made the difference between life for one and death for the other? What did the language of the poetry tell us? What did Plath mean in "Lesbos" when, to another woman, or to her second self she says--"Even in your Zen heaven we shan't meet."

Of forty or fifty students, I knew that more than half were "into" Plath and Sexton. I knew also that my attempt to get at the poetry through the themes of isolation and madness held for these women a personal, deeply felt fascination closer to their lives and to experience than any interpretation of "virtue" in Shakespeare's sonnet could ever hold. In the murmurings around me, I sensed that most people liked Plath better than Sexton, though I also knew that several women had been working on Sexton and had the ability, if not the confidence, to defend her. I had deliberately refused to make a choice between the two, preferring rather to provide a conceptual framework for the discussion--for the non-existent conflict. Why then were questions and comments information-seeking rather than analytical? And why did they disturb me so? (For example, "Does Laing talk about women's feelings about their bodies"? rather than a position: "The biological imagery in Sexton suggests that a crucial struggle of hers is to drain the poison from her body and love it.") Three reflections: 1) the women had taken as "truth" my still inchoate suggestions about madness because they sounded right, and gratuitous argument is not the feminist mode; thus we lacked, even in an unthreatening, non-competitive classroom--that mixed blessing--the argumentative, combative spirit which forces people to produce for others an ordered version of their interior responses to literature or to art. 2) None of us knew how to reconcile our distaste for passive, submissive, obedient girl-child classroom behavior with our equal distaste for the hidden emotional rivalry present in even the best forms of intellectual one-up-manship. 3) I was disturbed because people were soliciting useful information in class, an unusual academic situation.

At the end of the class we had an open discussion about conflict. Did the absence of argument or, more formally, of dialectic alienate us from the analytical powers of our own minds? We agreed that conflict and focus made us uneasy because they meant more to us than to men. We didn't choose up sides unrepresentative of our selves, "just for the sake of argument." We wanted to root out the conflicts deep within us, not create superficial and new ones. This meant that we had to begin from ourselves and from our just fears of the simultaneity between our isolated, individual, and silent recognition of Plath's and Laing's madness as our own, and the universal, shared, and even symbolic meaning of madness. Our own experiences made up the very patterns Laing demonstrated. In women's classes, we agreed, we must re-formulate Nin's assertion that women's relationships should be without conflict. Our goal should be to strengthen the female alliance so that conflict is neither gratuitous, nor does it constitute personal threat. For we sought an integration of feeling and thinking, experiencing and knowing.

I have just described the result of an approach to political or social life only recently conceptualized, not first by the women's movement, but by the New Left as it recoiled, horrified by the human toll taken through selfless political work of the early sixties. The argument runs--to make a

separation between personal and intellectual life, emotion and reason is to destroy a human, to make her a microcosm of our fragmented society by denying her the "direct sensuous apprehension of thought" or its counterpart--the rational apprehension of emotion. We must now ask how the Women's Movement, and specifically Women's Studies classes, have begun to resolve the problem brought into focus by the New Left and defined as a destructive separation between personal and intellectual concerns. In the Women's Movement, except in a few, heavily theoretical groups, the tendency has been to begin with one's emotional life, to ask "how do you feel," not "what do you think." "To be in touch with oneself" means to feel one's body and one's mind as friends, not as strangers, or to use Laing's phrase--to experience oneself as "in one's body," and so on some subterranean intuitive level of consciousness (and one that often seems maddeningly mystical to me) to know what decisions feel right as a snail knows by his antennae when to retreat into his shell.

But to be quite honest, I embrace that approach. Such an integrated mode of self-knowledge seems much more likely to crash us up against each other with some modicum of honesty, some sure desire to grasp an Other and the reality of our society, than the sterile school model of learning that scorned emotion for objective knowledge of the western tradition, that thus determined Paradise Lost as great work, obligatory to the curriculum whether one found it detestable, unuseful, or an essential key to the understanding of original sin and sexual desire. Sacred literary canons and "correct ideas"--and here the objective historian seems as blindfolded as the religious Marxist--led to an improbable battle in which reality had either to be denied, or to be tortured into a shape that conformed to theory.

In the political arena, air-tight theorizing leads to the experience Doris Lessing describes in the Africa interlude of The Golden Notebook. She speaks of the correct line to take in organizing a non-existent proletariat against racism:

> At the moment there were no black trade unions. . .So our picture of what ought to happen. . .because it was first principle that the proletariat was to lead the way to freedom, was not reflected anywhere in reality. Yet the first principle was too sacred to question. (p. 83)

There were those of us who knew if theory, or neatly ordered answers won, then we wound up not at one with ourselves, and barricaded against each other. If one accepts self-consciously and out of the need for order, an explanation of reality in conflict with the way one experiences reality, then this intellectual divided state either shuts one off from others--my disharmony will be found out--or more dangerous, it leads to tacit acceptance by a group of a theory they know to be out of joint. In either case, the self remains divided.

But the alternate mode, and the integrated one can also be deceptive. Last year, an immensely talented student in a Renaissance class of mine, after reading George Herbert's "The Collar"--"I struck the board, and cried, No more/ I will abroad..."--wrote a meditation on the heart-wounding agony of ending a relationship with a friend. He had used Herbert to move into his own consciousness, but quite evidently his writing responded "away" from Herbert, not towards

him. In the student's work, no analogy revealed the dimensions of Herbert's dilemma in the final lines of the poem--"Methought I heard one calling, Child!/ And I replied, My Lord." A relationship between father and child, as Lear's with his daughters, cannot end the way a friendship can. He had not admitted a distinction between Herbert's Herbert, and his own. My response was to make clear to the student that first, his writing was fine; second, that he must not be under the illusion that he knew Herbert; and that my own values were such that I wanted my Renaissance literature class first to know Herbert as precisely as possible, and then to include him in mutations or revelations of their own experience, or at least not to confuse knowing about a poem, a symbol, an historical movement with knowing yourself. I was there in one role as teacher--a critical and informed reader of Herbert. I was there also because I thought that art asked us to examine our own lives in a precise and demanding way. Often in my women's class I felt frustrated--unable to make clear where we stood in relation to the text. We wanted neither a steady barrage of revealed metaphor, nor an excursion occasioned by Plath's "The Rival," for example, into the way a particular man had manipulated a particular woman and we had to know if we were inside the poem or inside our own heads. Harmony of intellect and emotion means a partnership, not an obfuscation, but the struggle to achieve such a poise seems ungodly hard.

But even such struggle and criticism have a positive and exciting quality. We knew what we wanted and why. As the term wore on at Portland State, I began to feel the exhilaration of being almost there, of finding a mode in which we could move from personal experience to poem, from the precision of the written word to the ambiguity of our thoughts, where we could accept a reality that did not conform to theory, yet not at the expense of our own articulateness. In a later discussion of Anne Sexton's recent collection, Love Poems, a student Katherine complained that I had used "health" as a term to approve Sexton, and to condemn Plath. I explained that given the limitation of language, I had unavoidably sounded judgmental. What I meant was simply that Sexton had had the will to purge herself of poison, and was alive while Plath was dead. But what of this health, I asked, had Sexton been reborn into an uncomplex serenity, by having happily given her identity into the keeping of her lover? We had affirmed from personal experience that women sometimes begin to feel beautiful when they are loved. But had we read carefully, if in a love poem called "The Breast" we had taken at face value, and not ironically, the confident first line, "This is the key to it," when the final lines were:

> I am unbalanced--but I am not made with snow.
> I am mad the way young girls are made,
> with an offering, an offering...[sic]
> I burn the way money burns.

Certainly, Sexton made no anti-materialist critique of capitalism, but there was a certain blunt, unattractive self-mockery in the work "money." It does burn holes in one's pockets. Uncontrolled urgency tempered the simile of the young girl's sense of herself as a religious offering even if one were to accept the notion that a woman should offer herself to her lover. Woman depletes her own resources in payment for her awakened eroticism. She transmutes herself until she becomes "an offering, an offering..." Health then may mean simply an ability to live, though one knows the cost. Was feeling oneself to be an offering a price we paid to explore our sexuality? Such was the texture of our

discussion, perhaps unextraordinary for either literary flash or self-revelation but poised to intertwine literature and life, personal, emotional experience and intellectuality, a sense of art and a sense of self. Such a flow exemplifies the experience women need to become confident of their minds; it exemplifies also the experience a school can provide where there are teachers trained to stimulate and support a certain rigorous, disciplined learning which differs in quality and intensity from the "incidental" education we create and receive in the dailiness of our lives.

Listening to those who consider themselves experts at making new schools I'm struck recently by the amazing creative energy going into changing school climate, structuring the environment of a learning community, planning for maximum student participation in decision making. I detect, however, a curious omission. Rarely do innovators describe the content, the subject matter that might turn up in, for example, an open high school classroom. Either we've set the old content within a new bind, or we sense that if we were to admit the liberating potential of an open classroom, our classrooms would be closed again, and not by us or our students. I began this discussion with the least overtly political question--what are the special dynamics of a women's class? I followed it by describing the way in which a women's class could begin to solve the problem brought into focus by the student movement and defined as a separation between personal and intellectual concerns. I suggested that the solution was not to abandon thought in favor of feeling. Finally, I want to answer some useful and political questions: what books we read and discuss in a class called literature by women? what questions do we ask of literature and life? The reader should be cautioned that any of the following topics merits a whole essay, a night's talk, a summer's reading, that I am simply, but with eagerness for results, leaving to you.

Over the two years of Literature by Women, three problems, which seem to me the core of a women's curriculum in literature, arise consistently: first, a sorting out of old, largely Freudian approaches to psychology versus new and rapidly developing theoretical and practical formulations of a revolutionary psychology of women; second, an attempt at understanding the experience of women who are quite clearly and demonstrably Other than ourselves--black women, poor women, aristocratic women, non-western women, older women; third, a problem demanding some skills of literary analysis--is there a distinctly feminine language, world view, style of thought, self-image, does art define a female experience distinct from the so-called human one? Such questions lead us into psychology, sociology, and philosophy, into history and anthropology, into linguistic analysis, and toward sensitivity to the symbols which translate the interior life into consciousness. What follows is my subjective selection of our subject matter set out the way a term's work would run.

For the first problem, Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex still seems to me the most provocative theoretical formulation of women's problems. Though clearly taking her data from the life of the educated highly intellectual French woman, and thus being somewhat an Other to American middle class women, the clarity of her philosophical position, the sense we have in reading her of tangling with a committed, argumentative woman who cannot only argue against Freud, but articulate an alternative persuasive interpretation of human behavior, and particularly of infant sexuality, provides a women's class with one female

intellectual model, and with a vocabulary of working concepts--transcendence, immanence, projects, sexual initiation, female narcissism--which become a convenient shorthand for describing literary situations. De Beauvoir provides a feminist perspective on the sources of female despair. We go on to Doris Lessing and Anais Nin, who play out and modulate that despair, each distinct and differentiated in consciousness. Nin's pro-feminine position forces her deep into the mode of archetype where woman is bound by her earthy, life-perpetuating destiny to play out a complementary, life-sustaining role. To lure one out of the womb is to lure one into male objectivity. Nin says:

> Woman does not forget she needs the fecundator, she does not forget that everything that is born in her is planted in her... The woman was born mother, mistress, wife, sister, she was born to give birth to life.... Woman was born to be the connecting link between man and his human self. Between abstract ideas and the personal pattern which creates them.... The art of woman must be born in the womb-cells of the mind. She must be the link between the synthetic products of man's mind and the elements.

Nin's theme of woman as man's savior is predicated on an individual, solitary, internal struggle to <u>be</u> or <u>become</u> in the world which, problematically, it seems to me, posits a simplistic but provocative analogy between the interior life and the form of social relations, and denies the power of class, caste, and race on one's destiny. Though her recent writing shows more deference to social relations, the single "political" comment in <u>The Diaries</u> of pre-Nazi Europe (1931-1934) reads: "The inner hatreds of men are now projected outside. There are fights in the streets. Revolution in France, they say. Men did not seek to resolve their own personal revolutions, so now they act them out collectively." (p. 306). As if one were universally free to revolutionize his consciousness.

Neither woman's oppression nor economic reality can change solely by personal revolution, just as America will not become "green" by Charles Reich's route of Consciousness III. A new psychology of woman must incorporate a certain aspect of the womanhood of Nin's vision, but Doris Lessing's account of social reality immediately tempers Nin's sentimentality and her fallacious belief that woman today can be supporter and intermediary without being denied her selfhood. Lessing's women, ironically labeled "free," have the tools of Marxism, and of anti-Marxist critique, yet their lives project a despairing embroilment in a fragmented world which holds cynically out of reach a vision of social harmony. Lessing's women, having rejected the traditional female way of being, stumble forward with no model to follow because they are, as Anna says, "too intelligent"--too intelligent to be moulded by one single theory of social relations, one monochromatic filter through which to look upon the world. In an essay of 1958 called "The Small Personal Voice" Lessing expresses the conviction that all questions must be kept open. "Somewhere between the pleasurable luxury of despair...and the simple economic view of man is a resting-point, a place of decision, hard to reach and precariously balanced. It is a balance that must be continuously tested and reaffirmed... Living in this whirlwind of social change, it is impossible to make final judgments or absolute statements of value. The point of rest should be the writer's recognition of man, the responsible individual, voluntarily submitting his will to the collective, but never finally; and insisting on making his own

personal and private judgments before every act of submission." Her caution means for the Women's Movement that until new modes of explanation come into being, and even then, our attempts toward a socially responsible psychology of women must remain accepting of our individual ambiguities and of our obscure goals.

Lessing, Nin, and de Beauvoir self-consciously attempt to become new women, thus I think have a special niche in a woman's literature curriculum which seeks in art support for new ways to live one's life.

The second recurrent theme in women's classes has been a study of the experience of women who are not white, educated American college students. Twice that has meant an exploration of the relationship and the potential analogy between racial and sexual oppression and its effect on art. In Cleaver's Soul on Ice, Ellison's Invisible Man, and Jones' Dutchman, we deal with the concept of invisibility. The white who does not see the human uniqueness of the black man makes him a category Nigger as men make woman Sexual Object. On the other hand, Jones' Lula may be seen as the manipulative white bitch dominating the black man in the same way that white society dominates all blacks. Clay seems then to represent the human who completes himself by fulfilling another's expectations of him just as we have seen that women characteristically do. But the link between threatened sexuality and racism as it emerges in Clay's rage against Lula moves us toward questions about the black woman. The tables turned, Clay the black man apostrophizes black sex, confirming the white woman's fears of inadequacy and pushing her to murder him; he yells: "You want to do the belly rub? Shit, you don't even know how... Belly rub is not Queens. Belly rub is dark places with big hats and overcoats held up with one arm. Belly rub hates you. Old bald-headed four-eyed ofays popping their finger...and don't know yet what they're doing." What is the black woman's experience? We've listened to Billy Holiday and Bessie Smith and we've read Maya Angelou's moving autobiography I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, and the poets Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez. In Toni Cade's anthology The Black Woman, we are painfully aware of the imposition of white norms of literacy on the separate, coherent language and thought patterns of Blacks--what is the "double jeopardy," as one black woman calls it, to be black and a woman? Our problem, understandably, is gingerlyness in discussion, for though we admire the dazzle of Shirley Williams' writing in a short story "Tell Martha not to Moan," our revelation may end simply with an understanding of how close to the surface, how enormously complex are the insecurities of the black woman in relation to her men, how painfully bound up with the tolls of racism. Martha recounts a conversation with her black musician boyfriend, significantly named Time:

> Time tell me after we go to bed that night that he will kill me if he ever see me with a white man. I laugh and kiss him. 'What I want with a white man when I got you?' We both laugh and get in the bed... It funny, I think, how colored men don't never want no colored women messing with no white mens but the first chance he get, that colored man gon be right there in that white woman's bed. Yeah, colored men sho give colored womens a hard way to go... But I know if Time got to give a hard way to go, it ain't gon be for scaggy fay babe, and I kinda smile to myself. (p.53)

Obviously, questions of black language, black world view cannot be answered in several hours of class discussion. We have writings in black studies to help us, but the area remains almost completely unexplored, the questions not yet formulated.

Finally, the relation between female experience, feminism, and art seems a problem distinct from that of defining the consciousness of the new woman. In the art of Sexton and Plath, and in Christina Stead's The Man Who Loved Children, for example, childbirth and motherhood hold special female significance. In the pattern of a woman's life, these are moments in which the need for clear identity or self-definition intrudes with relentless, caustic rawness upon the vulnerable places in a woman's being. In Plath's "Morning Song," the newborn child, described in the stark, clean image of a marble statue, turns the mother back upon the encumbrances she wears which hide her emptiness. As feminists, we recognize that the hollowness of the mother cannot simply be dismissed as pathology, or as poetic imagery of lost innocence, but must also be analyzed in the light of social expectation. Are women permitted to feel unfulfilled and unguilty at the birth of a child? perhaps even at a distance from the baby? The mother speaks:

> In a drafty museum, your nakedness
> Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls...
>
> One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral
> In my Victorian nightgown.
> Your mouth opens clean as a cat's...

But where contrast and antithesis between mother and child describe Plath's experience, Sexton grows into health with and for her children. In that magnificently affirmative poem "Live," her daughters exchange their love for her madness:

> "...two daughters, two sea urchins,
> picking roses off my hackles.
> If I'm on fire they dance around it
> and cook marshmellows.
>
> And if I'm ice
> they simply skate on me
> in little ballet costumes..."

They help her to say:

> "I'm an empress.
> I wear an apron.
> My typewriter writes."

Her participation in the continuum of life, her creative act in mothering untainted children who, along with poetry, seem in de Beauvoir's language, a project or a goal, brings Sexton the incredible strength of will to survive, hence the archetypal theme of self-perpetuation. In "Little Girl, My String Bean, My Lovely Woman," she speaks of womanhood, and sexuality to her pubescent daughter, compressing in five brief lines the cycle of generation--from mother to daughter to daughter's potential fertility, impregnation and motherhood; she acknowledges her gentle fear, and protects her daughter with her powerful force of tenderness. She teaches love for the female body:

But before they enter
I will have said,
"Your bones are lovely,"
and before their strange hands
there was always this hand that formed.

In The Man Who Loved Children, Henny's before-the-fact expectations of marriage destroy her sanity when posed against the dailyness and drudgery of life with six children and a self-righteous, pious liberal of a husband. The texture of the book is mending clothes, runny noses, bitter hateful quarrels, and a gruff, grudging love. Of these three--Plath, Sexton and Stead--we might ask: is there a common experience between them? (I really don't know.) But we have a sense of never having read such womanly truth before because all three affirm a life reality that women have known, but that men, hence the dominant world view, have by and large denied.

The novels of Virginia Woolf are precisely and intimately revealing of two textures of the female mind for the creator's imagination of her characters seems maddeningly at odds with her Self. Would Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Dalloway have got on? Even if in To the Lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay reminds us too uncomfortably of our mothers, a devastating truth repeats itself in wanderings of her consciousness, for Woolf brings to the surface sensations, symbols, feelings that come into view and fade in our own lives. In the following selections from To the Lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay's responsibility for an ample household intrudes upon and even seems to take over the remnants of her healthy self-interest. She is formed as women are by the needs of others. Though woman's oppression varies with race and class, when Mrs. Ramsay feels a martyr, thinks her care for others not fully appreciated, must put domesticity above philosophy, her privileged life reflects a universal female condition. How far have we come from Victorian woman? Here domesticity and identity are inextricably linked:

> When there are fifteen people sitting down to dinner, one cannot keep things waiting forever. She was now beginning to feel annoyed with them for being so late; it was inconsiderate of them, and it annoyed her on top of her anxiety about them, that they should choose this very night to be out late, when, in fact, she wished the dinner to be particularly nice since William Bankes had consented to dine with them; and they were having Mildred's masterpiece--Boeuf en Daube... (p. 120).

Her philosophical questions must be displaced by servings of soup:

> But what have I done with my life? thought Mrs. Ramsay, taking her place at the head of the table, and looking at all the plates making white circles on it. "William sit by me," she said. "Lily," she said, wearily, "over there..." She had a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything, as she helped the soup, as if there was an eddy--there--and one could be in it, or one could be out of it, and she was out of it... (p. 125).
>
> They came to her, naturally, since she was a woman, all day long with this and that; one wanting this, another that; the children were growing up; she often felt she was nothing but a sponge sopped full of human emotions... (p. 51).

Her husband, an emotional cripple, and an intellectual, needs mothering too:

> Mr. Ramsay repeated...that he was a failure. She blew the words back at him... But he must have more than that. It was sympathy he wanted, to be assured of his genius, first of all, and then to be taken within the circle of life, warmed and soothed, to have his sense restored to him, his barrenness made fertile, and all the rooms of the house made full of life... (p. 59).

Woolf gives eloquent support to two vital, humanizing activities--reading and writing, and urges us to read women's writing, and to write for ourselves because, she says, the writing of men--with very few exceptions--though "acute and full of learning," lacks "the power of suggestion." In her A Room of One's Own (1928), when art is compared with life, art exhibits a consistent, hardly recognized, but fatal deprivation--the creative force of women.

> ...men...are now writing only with the male side of their brains. It is a mistake for a woman to read them, for she will inevitably look for something that she will not find...
>
> Do what she will a woman cannot find in [male writers]...that fountain of perpetual life which the critics assure her is there. It is not only that they celebrate male virtues, enforce male values and describe a world of men; it is that the emotion with which these books are permeated is to a woman incomprehensible.

But we have begun to understand books written by women, and with their help, to comprehend our own lives; and we have begun to write about experiences that we had been unable to name before we had a movement, and classes of our own.

Portland State University

UP FROM THE PODIUM: FEMINIST REVOLUTION IN THE CLASSROOM

by Barbara A. White

"A course on what? You're kidding. They actually let you teach that lib stuff at the university? And what, by the way, is 'The Woman-Myth' [substitute 'Sex Role Stereotyping' or whatever you titled your course]"? I imagine most of us met similar initial reactions to our Female Studies courses; the subject matter is at best odd and at worst "improper" or even ridiculous. And at first we probably felt alone in our new field. When, in September 1970, I began teaching "The Woman-Myth" to freshmen at Northwestern University, I had a general conception of the course--as an examination, through literature, of myths about women (myths not necessarily meaning untruths but widely and deeply held images and beliefs) and of roles women are forced to play in our society. But I had no models--no syllabi, no bibliographies, or the like. I was not sure how to proceed or what to expect from my students. Fortunately, this situation is swiftly changing: courses on women are proliferating; the Female Studies series has fulfilled a great need in providing information to teachers and encouraging fuller communications among them.

However, this does not mean that resistance to the subject matter has been overcome (try offering the course a second year--"What? You're teaching it again? I thought it was just an experiment"--meaning, I guess, just for kicks). I would like to give an example from my experience last year. Since more than half my first term students had been female, I was surprised to find one of my second term sections two-thirds male. I prepared myself for some resistance to the subject matter (the first question concerning The Second Sex was whether or not Simone de Beauvoir was married and if not, why not), but I underestimated its extent. For the first week communication was mostly non-verbal--consisting of snicker twice, roll your eyes, and elbow your buddy in the ribs. Why were they in the class, it seemed time to ask. A very guilty-looking young man finally volunteered the answer, in private, of course; he and nine or ten friends from the same dorm had decided to take the course as a joke. "A joke"? I repeated, a little slow on the uptake. "Well, I mean, a course on women--" he giggled in spite of himself and looked more guilty than ever. Like many of our stories about women, this one is extreme but true, and although it may not occur frequently in such pure form, the Female-Studies-as-joke attitude (I'd like to study some females myself--ho, ho) is bound to be encountered.

But let's look forward to a time in the near future when colleges and universities will give Women's Studies a provisional acceptance and no longer treat it as weird or amusing. There will still be objections to and problems arising from the subject matter. First, the subject is too broad. Predictably, this objection seems to be raised by administrators and professors, rather than students. For instance, last spring the Northwestern Curriculum Committee rejected a student proposal for a seminar "analyzing sexism through the study of American family roles" because "the topic appeared to be far too broad to allow a systematic approach." As I leaf through Female Studies II, I find such titles as "Women and Culture," "Sex and Politics," "The Position of Women in the Social Order," "Women as a Minority Group"--the Curriculum Committee would,

I assume, be scornful of all of these. Breadth, however, is not merely a problem in the minds of conservative administrators; we may feel it as teachers. Whether we limit ourselves to "The Psychology of Women," or "Family and Kinship," or "Myths of Women in Literature," we know that our subject keeps extending itself outward and in fact encompasses the whole of human experience. (Our bibliography-making often strikes me as ironic since our bibliography actually consists of all written works--what can be left out?) Questions: how are we to "cover" our subject, or analyze it, or explore it in depth, whichever our proclivities, without losing our bearings? and how hard are we going to try to do so, especially when our students may really be interested in discussing the dynamics of the dating game?

Here we are confronted with another problem. Any Female Studies course, even if it's called "The Sociometrics of Male/Female Role Differentiation," is personal. Students may fight like mad to avoid the personal implications of the subject; this was the case with the "jokesters" I mentioned above. Most became interested in the course material on an abstract level, but whenever a discussion reached a dangerous, that is, personal, point, they would shout down the offender and change the subject or clam up and resume elbowing. In my experience it was not only male students who considered the course, or parts of it, a personal threat. One girl enjoyed the first half of the course but became upset when she felt that our authors were "putting down marriage"; she absented herself until we had finished specific discussion of married women. The personal relevance of the course may also create difficult emotional situations in the classroom, viz. "embarrassing" revelations ("My mother is a domineering bitch"), namecalling ("You're a bitch"), screaming, shouting, fights ("Ibsen's Nora was a bitch"), stomping, tears, and sudden silence. (The teacher, of course, is not exempt from emotional reactions.) In what other course could one find, sandwiched between two abstract statements in a student's essay on marriage, "You probably think I'm a nothing, Barbara, but in our Puerto Rican culture we're taught respect for the family." It makes one consider one's responsibility as teacher more seriously than ever--and sometimes I felt like leaving town.

Not only do we have problems with our subject matter, its alleged "impropriety," its breadth, its personal nature, but we have to face anew our role as women teachers. That students in general look up to and "respect" male teachers more than female ones has been well-documented. (There is, for instance, the experiment in which a man and a woman of equal speaking abilities delivered the same lecture to similar classes; the male's lecture was rated more significant, more scholarly, more original, more stimulating, more everything than the female's.) Of course, the woman teacher always has this difficulty, but in a course on women it is intensified because her role is more visible--and why is she teaching this particular course in the first place? She no longer has the protection of having succeeded in a traditionally male, and thus authentic, discipline. If, in addition, the woman teacher attempts to renounce authoritarian teaching methods, her position is complicated further. For example, to refer again to my male-dominated class, the "jokesters" would not have enrolled in it in the first place if they had not checked out my reputation as a permissive teacher and figured (correctly) that they would not be "punished" for taking the course.

So far I have outlined some of the difficulties I have faced in teaching about women. It is conceivable that some of my particular (or more extreme) experiences have been idiosyncratic, but the problems themselves, it seems, are general ones and as relevant to a small women's college, for instance, as to a large co-educational university. Now, what are some possible solutions? As I mentioned before, we are already combatting the initial resistance to Female Studies, the idea that courses dealing with women are odd, funny, improper, outrageous, and so forth. Already, we have Women's Studies programs on some campuses; most probably, we will soon have programs or even departments on several, this in addition to scattered courses on many, many others. The question then becomes, how are these programs and courses to be handled? Grudging acceptance of the general idea of Female Studies by university administrations does not mean instant removal of the old objections; many courses will undoubtedly be dubbed "far too broad to allow a systematic approach" (Northwestern Curriculum Committee) and perhaps a little messy on the side.

We may well be tempted to "legitimize" or justify our subject by making it as specialized, as "objective," as impersonal as possible. We can begin narrowing our courses, restrict ourselves to "Women's Role in Industry" or "The Woman as Short Story Writer," keep the class on the topic, discourage integration of the topic with personal experience--in other words, mold our courses to fit the present curriculum. In doing this, we would satisfy our "superiors" and at the same time allay some of our own doubts and fears; at least our students are learning something (they know the difference between polygamy and polygyny, and George Eliot was not a man), and we don't have to worry that our ideas may screw up their lives outside of class. Further, we can solve our woman-as-teacher problem, "legitimize" or justify ourselves, by making use of our power as teachers. As Jerry Farber notes in The Student as Nigger (Pocket Books, p. 95), teaching is one career in which meek people can take a power trip--so it seems tailor-made for us. If we assert the authority of our position to the full, we can become almost-men, and then if we feel a little guilty or uncomfortable we can tell ourselves that we are acting as strong "role models" for undergraduate women! In summary, we can solve all our teaching-about-women problems by imitating male-created courses and typical male teacher behavior.

Now I am obviously exaggerating; no doubt most of us would never go this far, or we wouldn't be teaching Female Studies in the first place. But I am attempting to point out a direction which we will be encouraged to take, and one which we might be tempted to lean toward--at tremendous cost, I believe, to our students and ourselves. Ironically, the "problems" I have been describing as endemic to our women's courses--their tendency to broaden indefinitely, their personal nature, their intensifying of our woman teacher role difficulty--are also advantages. Let us consider them in light of the goals of some educational critics and feminists.

Jerry Farber is hardly a feminist, and his skills are more rhetorical than analytical; yet, given his humanistic values, his view of our educational system is of course ("of course" because our schools reflect as well as help form the society as a whole) very similar to feminist Shulamith Firestone's extended analysis of our male-dominated culture. What is wrong with our schools, according

to Farber? Well, to start with, their subject matter and method is standardized, narrow, impersonal. School, says Farber, limits rather than expands the mind, as it teaches students to "exercise their critical thought only within narrow limits prescribed by the authorities" (p. 28). We may add that independence, creativity, responsibility are clearly frowned upon; production for its own sake, "measurable" results, are emphasized above personal growth and development. In other words, "systematic approach" (Northwestern Curriculum Committee again) is what counts, and our schools prepare us to be "professionals" and "specialists," productive within our respective fields--and ignorant and passive outside. And don't we thus become readily exploitable?

I hope I have made it clear by now why I believe that administrators and department heads will encourage us (more likely attempt to force us) to "justify" our Female Studies as "legitimate scholastic pursuits" by narrowing and rigidifying them. A Female Studies Department, staffed by Full, Associate, and Assistant Professors, offering fifty-minute lecture courses such as A1--Women from 1800-1850 and A2 (A1 prerequisite)--Women from 1850-1900, is not dangerous. But right now our womens courses have explosive potential for expanding student (and teacher) perception, for fostering growth and change. The broad, all-encompassing nature of our subject may create problems for us (how do we select, how do we avoid the facile survey, breadth without depth), but the specialization route reinforces the deadness of our educational system and the exploitative methods of our male supremacist society.

"Standardized" and "narrow" Farber called our school subjects and methods, and his third adjective was "impersonal." Certainly our subject matter is almost always abstracted and divorced from feeling, or from possibilities of action; most teachers are highly impersonal and if they weren't their high school and college students, having been well trained in the school system, would be embarrassed as hell. I would like to quote here a statement from Female Studies II which impressed me. Lillian Robinson, who taught a course called "The Sexual Order" at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (brave woman), says: "More than half my students...are female, but the nature of the course is largely determined by the male-dominated institution that surrounds it. MIT is, of course, a 'university polarized around science.' This peculiarity has also contributed to the way the course works. With their strong background in science, MIT students are most responsive to a discursive, objective approach to cultural phenomena. They are less willing to make the connections between social and personal experience...I have the impression that students take the course most seriously when it is concerned with broad cultural questions, but react with defensive jocularity when it comes closer to their own lives" (p. 42).

I doubt whether Ms. Robinson's experiences are as "peculiar" as she implies: actually, her class seems very similar to my two-thirds male section ("defensive jocularity" is a good general term for snickering and elbowing). At any rate, MIT is only different in degree, just as Northwestern may be different in degree from smaller colleges. All our colleges and universities are male-dominated, even when the students are exclusively female; most students are most responsive to a discursive, objective approach and are unwilling or unable to make the connections between social and personal experience--after all, this is what they (and we teachers too, by the way) have been taught in our school system for thirteen or more years.

The broken connection has a long tradition. We can go back, for example, to John Dewey's The School and Society: "From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilize the experience he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school. That is the isolation of the school--its isolation from life.... The problem is to unify, to organize, education, to bring all its factors together, through putting it as a whole into organic union with everyday life" (Phoenix Books, pp. 75, 92). That was in 1902. Since then Dewey's ideas have been used to support an opposite goal (a fate partially deserved, if one notes the values implied by the words "waste" and "organize"), and we still have the same problem. It has been called separation of thought and action, knowledge and experience, the subjective and the objective, the emotional and the rational--whatever you will.

Again, the problem is not merely a "school problem," but one of society as a whole. Almost all feminist thinkers have noted the schism between emotion and intellect which seems to be exacerbated in males and is thus a characteristic of our male-created culture. The Feminist Movement is clearly committed to the attempt at reintegration, both in the individual personality and the larger society, the attempt, as Shulamith Firestone puts it, to "reconcile the personal --always the feminine prerogative--with the public, with the 'world outside,' to restore that world to its emotions, and literally to its senses" (The Dialectic of Sex, Bantam, p. 38). If we wish to take part in that restoration, which I assume we do, I think we must welcome the personal implications of Female Studies. There are the problems I mentioned earlier (on the one hand resistance of students and perhaps ourselves and on the other creation of emotional situations in the classroom which we've never before had to handle), but it seems that they are necessary steps on the way to reintegration. The nature of our subject and the possibility that we as women may be better equipped to deal with the personal give us an opportunity it would be a shame to miss.

I have left the third major criticism of our educational system for last because I feel that it may be the most important. It is perhaps the most frequently voiced criticism: that our teaching methods are coercive, that teachers dominate the classroom, that teachers conceive of their authority, not in the proper sense of their having presumably greater knowledge and/or special abilities, but in the sense that they have the right to exert power over students. Teachers are masters; students are "niggers," and they indeed develop the passivity, dependence, and cunning survival methods of the slave. This point seems so obvious to me that I wonder if I need even provide support. But for evidence I give you the hierarchical structure of our colleges and universities themselves (why are they that way?), and if anyone has further doubts, I simply ask--who decides on the courses to be given; who sets the goals and expectations of the course, chooses the texts, organizes the material, decides the methods, determines the requirements; and, above all, who gives the grades? (And why?) In other words, who controls the course and the classroom?

It seems to me that the analogy of power relationships in the classroom and power relationships between the sexes in our larger society is also obvious. For "teachers" or "masters" read "men," and for "students" or "slaves" read

"women." As women teachers we thus have, as I mentioned previously, the option of becoming part master--we can exert power over our students and force them to exhibit equal "respect" for us and work (slave?) as hard for us as they would in just the ways that they would for their male teachers. But in our feminist analysis this is hardly the answer to the question of power. One of the great advances of feminist theory, in my opinion, is its perception that the only way to end the oppression of women as a class and to humanize our society is to abjure merely grabbing chunks of power for ourselves and to start getting rid of the power psychology altogether. It would seem incumbent upon us, then, as Female Studies teachers, to begin trying to break down the master/slave student-teacher relationship.

I am under no illusion that this is an easy task. First, there are our own psychological needs. Shulamith Firestone believes that, given the deep roots of the power psychology in sexual class and family structure, it is too much to expect that anyone born today would be completely successful in eliminating it. She goes on to make the interesting point that many women "identifying all their lives with men [I assume this has been true of most of us for most of our lives or we wouldn't be holding our present positions], find themselves in the peculiar position of having to eradicate, at the same time, not only their submissive natures, but their dominant natures as well, thus burning their candle at both ends" (p. 39). Secondly, we will have to contend with the wrath, or at best discomfort, of both the educational establishment and some of our students who fear change. Third, we will have to think about all sorts of things that it's more convenient not to think about--for example, the grading system. How can we teach Female Studies under the traditional grading system? It is a contradiction. But how can we not grade and still have a worthwhile course when we are working within a competitive system with grade-motivated students? And so on. The position is extremely difficult. However, the alternative seems to me practically suicidal. If we don't renounce that part of our authority which is inauthentic and based only on our role as teacher, we are both dangerously splitting our selves--we are part master but still part slave--and reinforcing, with our own power-based methods, the general male power structure which oppresses us as women.*

I think we need to consider carefully Jerry Farber's point that "It's not what you're taught that does the harm but how you're taught" (p. 19). The enduring content of our education, he claims, is its method, which affects us deeply while the subject matter often slips our minds (what do you remember from, say, high school algebra or college French?). Content varies from year

---

*I recommend chapter four of The Dialectic of Sex, "Down with Childhood," in which Shulamith Firestone discusses the emergence of the modern concept of childhood and its institutionalization in the school. The chapter may suggest possibilities for further work on the history of the modern school and the relation of the oppression of children-students to the oppression of women.

By the way, I have been focusing exclusively on "higher" education, but I think my comments on Women's Studies apply equally to high school and grade school; in fact, they could be more relevant because at a younger age neither the coercive methods nor the rigid sex roles have been so well-learned.

to year but the form--structure of rules, punishments, rewards--remains the same and often influences students' lives more directly than the content. We are happy when students react positively to the content of our courses on women, when they begin to become aware of the pervasiveness of sex roles and the ideology which supports them; I am always elated when I hear (preferably overhear) one of my students say, "My God, I'm beginning to see everything in terms of this course."

But we must ask ourselves--how long will this last? and if our range is narrow, our methods standardized, impersonal, authoritarian, are we not contradicting our feminist goals, actually teaching through our old methods what we've been trying to unteach through our new content? Unless one conceives of Female Studies as merely an opportunity for new intellectual exercises, there is no sense in teaching about women (or demanding more women professors) if we are going to support the traditional methods. It would be a tragic irony if we found that we were only helping fit our students for a male-dominated world, a world rigid, compartmentalized, emotionally illiterate, a world based on fear, competition, power struggle, and war. We can do better. In her introduction to Female Studies I, Sheila Tobias lists as a crucial issue "how innovative in educational techniques Female Studies can afford to be." My question is--how can we possibly afford not to be innovative?

Northwestern University

ALL MALE STUDENTS AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

by Mary Tyler Knowles

There were no female students taking my seminar in Spring 1971 on "The Literary Mistreatment of Women" for there are no women freshmen at Dartmouth College.

The student body of this Ivy League institution is comprised primarily of upper-middle class and working class students. The middle income student cannot afford the tuition and few scholarships are available for this group. The mothers and sisters of the upper-middle class student (in the absence of women his primary reference group) do not usually feel the pressures of being women in a male-dominated world for they have quite enough money to have domestic servants, cars of their own, luxurious vacations, and the like. They do not feel trapped in their homes by domestic chores and child-rearing. Consequently, for the students from this environment, the very notion of (or anything to do with) women's liberation has an air of unreality and exaggeration about it. On the other hand, the mothers and sisters of the working class youths usually need to work to supplement the family's income in addition to doing all the household chores. Yet they do not question the orientation of their lives (according to their sons) for they believe that they are merely performing their natural "feminine" duty. For their sons the issue of who should do the household work is answered traditionally; these students do question the unequal employment opportunities open to women but at the same time they hope that their wives will not need to work.

Both groups of students in my seminar dismissed any suggestion that capitalism is one source of sexist discrimination as leftist propaganda. The upper-middle class students had been raised enjoying the fruits of corporate profit whereas the working class students had upwardly mobile aspirations. Both groups therefore defended capitalism. And naturally neither group was willing to assign the sexism of the American society to a conspiracy of men.

A third group, actually two black students, was considerably more sympathetic to abuses that exist within the capitalistic system, especially the treatment of women on welfare. Yet both these students felt that women's liberation was a white middle-class fad which would pass. They, too, felt that women able to afford to stay home were lucky and should not complain. They believed that black women would be foolish to become a part of the women's movement for they would then be a divisive force in the black (predominantly male) struggle against racism.

The background biases of the students became apparent from their response to a questionnaire distributed the first day of class. Questions dealing with role channeling in childhood--whether boys ought to be allowed to play with dolls, whether they should ever cry--were answered traditionally. Other questions dealing with the relative intelligence of women vis-a-vis men provoked a wider range of responses--whether women have less aptitude for theoretical speculation, whether women are less interested in politics (they are, but how do you explain it?), why many girls do better than boys in elementary school,

then fall behind in junior high. Predictably, when asked what qualities they felt important for a girl on a date or one they would pick out at a mixer, they all answered by specifying certain requirements in external appearance ("Who'd want to be seen with a 'dog'"?). More interesting, an overwhelming majority characterized the successful career woman as aggressive, domineering, cold, a bad mother, and an inadequate wife, thus showing that they subscribe to the pervasive negative stereotypes. Additionally, the students felt that they would have to be more successful in their own careers and make more money if they were married to such successful women.

Most students felt that home duties traditionally female were indeed the woman's job even if she were employed full time. (The exceptions felt that she should relegate unpleasant tasks to a maid.) They were willing to "help out" with the occasional jobs--trash detail, pushing stuck cars, shoveling snow, making home repairs, mowing lawns--yet they were unwilling to share the daily drudgery work. Half of the students believed that women got equal pay for equal work. Nonetheless, most of them were able to rise above their initial shock at seeing a female plumber or mechanic for the first time and felt that if a woman had such a job she must be capable of doing it.

Other questions dealing with sexual relations (who should initiate the lovemaking, whether women are more sexually passive than men), homosexuality (a real threat to young freshmen), birth control (where the responsibility should lie) were answered traditionally. They were asked what they thought the relationship between black men and women was; most answered honestly that they had no idea. Attitudes towards women's liberation--a joke, a communist plot, a fad, a much needed movement--were explored. Included, also, was my favorite question: "How would you feel if there were a female equivalent of Playboy and you were asked to pose as the Playboy of the Month if you consented to have your penis enlarged with silicone and hair glued on your chest, and to complete a 10-week body building course"?

For a course ostensibly dealing with the literary mistreatment of women this material may seem irrevelant just as the three weeks spent on background material (the psychological, economic, religious, sociological, and anthropological roots of women's oppression). And yet in order to deal with feminine depictions in the literature, it proved crucial both to understand the students' preconceptions of women and to attempt to rid them of, or at least to question, some of their biases. The single most encouraging aspect of the course was the change in attitudes and the amount of knowledge the students had by the end of the course. The two men who responded in the most sexist (and amused) manner to the questions had real conversion experiences. Nonetheless, the course was not without its failure. One of the black students who was most conscious from the beginning of the discrimination against women increasingly felt that women's liberation was only a superficial fad.

Another mechanism for self-examination which proved successful was a daily journal kept by all and commented extensively on by me at two and a half week intervals. Some made their journals extremely personal, analyzing their relationships with girls, with their families, recording conversations with their friends (a shocker!), commenting on the female college workers' working

conditions (this done by several of the scholarship students who worked in the libraries and dining hall where conditions remain very oppressive--), clipping out sexist ads and articles in papers as well as commenting on all the reading. For others the journal proved to be a chore for they merely summarized the reading, leaving their feelings unexamined. Several members of the former group plan to keep a journal in the future.

A final mechanism for deeper study of women and their condition was a long final paper whose progress was reported on at intervals in the journal. The topics I gave out were wide-ranging and did not all deal with literature. Two students did superior work on sexual role channeling in children's literature; two others did a good job on women's status in Lutheranism and in Chinese religions. Other topics selected were the treatment of women in The Rainbow, Lolita, Anna Karenina, Pride and Prejudice, the stereotypes of black women in white and in black literature, pornographic representations of women, the female role in male utopian novels, Portnoy's Complaint and the Jewish mother figure, and an autobiographical extension of a journal.

During the three weeks of background reading several female colleagues attended the sessions. For example, a bio-chemist led the discussion on Lionel Tiger's "Male Dominance. Yes, alas! A Sexist Plot? No," which provoked the largest amount of argument. The students' own arguments from genetics, historical imperatives, analogies to animals were proved to be comforting fallacies and destroyed one by one. Another fascinating class was led by an avowed male chauvinist colleague ostensibly on Henry Miller's Tropic of Cancer. Here the students saw sexism in action as the discussion leader refused to let me, a female auditor, or another female colleague who attended this session speak and put us down as idealistic and shortsighted (or stupid?) when we did. The students requested that a very "far-out" radical woman speak to the class but none was available. I had them read Shulamith Firestone's The Dialectics of Sex as a partial remedy, which provoked bitter discussion, especially on non-nuclear family living and test-tube babies.

One problem I faced and was never able to fully resolve was that I was the only woman in the classroom apart from an auditor who, like me, was married, a mother, and twelve years older than the students. I was trying both to lead the discussions in a very open-ended way without stifling any sort of response, and at the same time as an oppressed woman (in terms of job status, traditional domestic roles, and so forth) I wanted to take issue with what was said. I never solved this problem, except that I permitted the students to grade themselves so that they would feel they could speak out honestly and not merely give lip service to my views. Having women students in the class, even though they might not all have been conscious of their oppression, would have been an invaluable asset.

One other issue I never absolutely resolved was how to deal with the reality behind feminine stereotypes in the literature. That is, there are many "Emma Bovarys," who see the world as a romantic pulp novel; nonetheless, the creation of such a heroine bolsters the preconception that women are stupid and foolish and provides a rationale for continuing to treat women unequally and to do so with impunity. Additionally, to condemn an author such as Flaubert as being

without foresight, for not rising above common types, is unfair, especially when he delineated the provincial environment and the dullwittedness of the males who created a situation in which a Madame Bovary could thrive. Here the background material proved to be useful, for we were able to relate what was commonly felt to be the reality of women's natures to the ideal situation which was to be worked for. That is, we were at times able to show that fiction might truthfully reflect reality at a given time and yet neither the reality nor the fiction need determine the future, which should be and could be different.

We could criticize heroines because they were stereotypical--weak females (as Miriam in Sons and Lovers), romantics (such as MadameBovary, and Nora, The Doll's House), women who lusted to be dominated (as Henry Miller's women, Clara in Sons and Lovers, Martha in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Kristin and Pamela Watson-May in Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me)--while recognizing at the same time the artistry of the creation. Although we only skimmed the surface of recent comparative literature we could see broad outlines of changing mores from Tolstoi's Kreutser Sonata, where adultery was scorned, to the so-called "sexual freedom" accepted in Been Down So Long... and Who's Afraid. But change was not all we noted. Even when social mores are loosened, women are still regarded as irresponsible (Kristin gives Gnossos clap), stupid (Pamela Watson-May), petty, vindictive, and playing the games of lusting for power while still wishing to be dominated (Martha). Such a hip anti-hero as Gnossos Papadouplis still shows male supremacist attitudes when he takes his pleasure on Pamela pretending to use a condom and, afterwards, slapping an enema in her face (the students found this scene roaringly funny) or when, in an assertion of the double-standard, he brutally shoves a heroin suppository up Kristin's ass for betraying him with another man.

The students responded very positively to Gnossos ("Kristin deserved what she got. She shouldn't have fucked him over"; they totally ignored how Gnossos "fucked" everyone else over in his search for meaning) just as they responded positively to Nick Adams in Hemingway's In Our Time. This latter novel was perhaps my best selection for an all-male college course both because of the athletic culture at Dartmouth and because of the empathy felt by draft-age students for a hero who also must face the horrors of war. The absence of women from the stories, the feeling that women spoil the male fun of cross-country skiing, fishing, and drinking and provide oppressive responsibilities (the latter is true, of course, only when women remain dependent on men for their very survival) led to one of the best class discussions of the term. One student claimed that I contradicted myself in believing that women should get off by themselves to work out their collective oppression, but that Hemingway showed sexism and immaturity in feeling that male comradeship was man's greatest boon.

The most explosive class came when we discussed Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? We had spent over an hour discussing the relationship between George and Martha, the games of power struggle they played to hide from themselves and from the harshness of the real world without fantasy, the barren (in all senses) relationship between Nick and Honey, and the stereotypical nature of the characters. I then posed the view that the play was Albee's attack on heterosexual relationships and that perhaps the main characters were thinly

disguised homosexuals. At this point one student said that he felt the play was actually a sexual act in five acts--all the fighting was a prelude, the exorcism the climax, and the ending the relaxation after orgasm. When one student demanded to know if this was a homosexual act the first student said it was irrelevant. With that the second student turned on the first saying he was perverted and the fur flew! The very idea of sexual roles being shifted to the point where homosexuality was irrelevant was enormously threatening. The need the students felt to cling to belief in their own masculinity was obviously most intense. Even to discuss the possible variation in sex roles was so discomforting as to end in hysteria and mutual recriminations--almost a fist fight.

The major topic explored by all the reading was an investigation of the present-day marital situation. The counter-view to Lawrence, Hemingway, Miller, Wylie, Albee, and the like was provided by collateral readings from Sisterhood Is Powerful (ed. Robin Morgan), Masculine/Feminine (ed. Betty and Theodore Rozsak), Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique, Kate Millett's Sexual Politics, Elaine Showalter's Women's Liberation and Literature, Shulamith Firestone's The Dialectics of Sex, Germaine Greer's The Female Eunuch, Anais Nin's Journals, Toni Cade's The Black Woman.

In conclusion, the course was a qualified success. The absence of female students, the consequent necessity of my being trapped between roles of teacher and women's liberationist, the inability of males ever to completely respond as women might have responded, the lack of a real critique of capitalism, all marred it somewhat. Also, were I to do the course again or to do a two-term sequence, I would include female authors (especially George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing, Louise Merriweather) as well as children's literature. This is a reversal of my original belief that male students would respond most easily to male authors, for now I feel that they need to listen to the feminist in order to understand how she views herself and her societal role. Only then will they have enough background to understand how male authors can abuse a woman literarily. Despite all these shortcomings, a large number of students said afterwards that the course was their most valuable one, that it had opened their minds, had changed their attitudes, and that it would make a difference in their lives. Whether this prediction is borne out is, of course, another matter.....

Dartmouth College

TEACHING WOMAN'S HISTORY EXPERIMENTALLY

by Bryan Strong

Young historians seem to spend a good deal of time with one another wondering why it is so difficult to engage their students in the study of history with the same passion which they possess. In classes these teachers make every attempt to make the material relevant, though few receive anything more from their students than the same quiet, attentive indifference which is the lot of more traditional teachers. Yet if the course is relevant by its very nature--like Black history or woman's history--their concern suddenly shifts toward making the students quiet, attentive, and indifferent so that the class will remain objective. For fear of the intensity of involvement, for fear that the whole person, not simply the mind, will become involved, the problem for them then becomes one of making an exceedingly relevant, even existentially relevant, course irrelevant.

One young professor suggested to me that whenever he teaches a course whose subject matter personally concerns his students, he becomes rigorously academic, focusing his analysis and that of his class on the texts and never allowing his students to leave the questions under direct examination.

I had originally disputed that view until several women who had enrolled in my colloquium--"History of American Feminism, 1860 - 1920"--asked me the kind of question which so many white instructorsreceived from Black students several years before: "How can you teach a course on women"? Since I had always believed in woman's equality I took offense at such a question and began to reconsider how I would teach the course. Since woman's rights was obviously an emotional question which seemed to blur the thinking of some women--why else challenge me, I thought--I decided to conduct the colloquium in a thoroughly intellectual manner. If the class only addressed itself to intellectual and historical questions, then, because I knew the historical questions fairly well, there would be no grounds on which the women might challenge me, for a man understands the intellectual issues as well as a woman. Only if it were said that a man could not feel what it was like to be a woman would they be on solid ground, but I decided to close that possibility. The reading assignments and written work were consequently heavy so that the students would understand from the very beginning that they were in a purely academic course. Naturally, my authority was to remain unchallenged.

Two hours before the first class meeting I decided that I had organized the course in such a way as to undermine its genuine significance for the students, for no other reason than that I did not want to handle the complex emotional responses that students might have about woman's past. It was not only because I was a man and felt that the women would be hostile toward a male instructor (which was both true and a projection), but I did not know where the course might go without firm direction and intellectual goals. It was the first course I had actually taught at Stanford as an instructor rather than as a teaching assistant, and I wanted it to be successful.

When the class met that afternoon almost fifty students, mostly women, crowded into a small seminar room in the undergraduate library. I had limited enrollment in the course to fifteen students and that quota had been filled during pre-registration. I explained to the students that I would extend enrollment to twenty, but that twenty was the absolute maximum. I suggested that those who were not really interested in feminism drop out in order to allow those who were interested to enroll. None did, and everyone in the room expressed great interest in taking the class. One of the undergraduate women in the course, Marty Hale, who was largely responsible for interesting the History Department in offering the course, proposed that I teach two sections of the colloquium, which everyone thought was the best solution, except myself, since I had a dissertation to write. I finally agreed since there seemed no way of limiting the course without disappointing a large number of students. Altogether there were forty-one students in the two colloquia, of whom six were men. There was one Black woman in the class, but she rarely came since she considered feminism a white, middle-class movement.

In the two hours prior to this first meeting I completely re-organized the format of the course since I understood the reasons for my earlier approach. It was senseless, I felt, to make a course which was potentially so important to each student's understanding of herself, just another class to be completed before graduation. So, nervously and still a bit defensively, I began to outline the new format for the colloquia. First, there would be no papers assigned in the traditional sense; rather, they would keep journals of their responses to the reading, discussion, friends, teacher, and so forth. These journals would be ungraded but required, and I only asked that they be in some way connected with women, either contemporarily or historically. These were to be turned in at three separate times, and I promised to return copies of them with my comments on them. The last section of the journal was to be an evaluation of the course, based on tape recordings of earlier class meetings. (I taped most sessions so that the students would get a sense of what degree of learning and change had taken place in themselves over the quarter.)

Secondly, I announced that I would try to arrange an encounter group session with a friend of mine who was a psychologist in order to explore male/female roles. Thirdly, after the first hour-and-a-quarter of the colloquium, which I had hoped would be conducted along the lines of traditional academic inquiry, the class would break up into small groups of three's or four's at the Coffee House where they might discuss more freely questions which were raised in either the class or their own minds. Each time I asked that they meet with students whom they did not know. These more intimate engagements I thought would develop confidence among the quieter students to participate actively in class discussion since they would then know the other students in a personal manner. Hopefully such acquaintance with one another would prevent division along male/female and radical/conservative (in terms of sex roles) lines. Fourthly, the last class session was to be held in a cabin in the mountains overlooking Stanford where the members of the class would participate in an historical role-playing session. Each student was to select an historical or fictional character from a list of names which I had prepared, and they were to play-act that person for an hour or so in the context of a 19th-century woman's rights convention.

Although I still feel ambiguous about the colloquia, this experimental approach was probably the most effective way of reaching the students in terms of what they seemed to want out of the course. The journals which the students kept revealed that they generally enrolled in the course for personal as well as academic reasons. Among the men, no single reason seemed to stand out. One took the course because his girl friend wanted him to conform more to a dominating male stereotype, and he was searching for reasons to be himself in that relation. Another enrolled because in prep school he learned little respect for women, either personally or intellectually, and he thought that he might change that opinion from contact with the type of woman who would take this course. A third man took the course because he wanted to meet some new women, liked the sex ratio in the class, but also liked to argue with women against women's liberation.

The radical women in the class, who numbered about a third of the class, took the course because they were intimately involved in feminism not only as a personal issue but as a political one as well. Their major reason for taking the class was to gain historical background to justify the contemporary woman's movement to both men and women. The remaining women in the class, the conservative women, that is, those women who did not go beyond demanding as their primary goal equal economic rights, generally took the course out of some vaguely defined curiosity, because women's liberation was in the air. These women usually had very little contact with women active in the woman's movement and, consequently, had little opportunity of learning about it first hand. One woman remarked--and I think this might have been true of a number of others as well--that she took the course to learn about what was happening in the woman's movement today without stigmatizing her amongst her friends as a radical. For some reason a number of women enrolled with either roommates or close friends. "For security," said one freshman who was taking it with her roommate.

The emotional undercurrents in the class were quite different from what one encounters in a class on, say, colonial history. At the second class meeting I asked those students who were interested in the encounter group session on male/female roles to meet with me the next day at History Corner to make arrangements for it. Interest was high, but when I arrived at the meeting, some ten minutes late, I was surprised that only four students had come. More surprising was that they were all men! (Later a fifth student arrived, a woman.) We all sat slightly awkwardly as Margo McNeil, who was to lead the session, asked us what we specifically wanted from the experience. (After some debate with myself I decided that I would also participate in the encounter group.) No one exactly knew, except that they felt some kind of uneasiness in a class dominated by women. They were vaguely anxious in the class because they felt that whenever they spoke they had to justify not only their ideas but the fact that they were men offering ideas about women. There was a good deal of truth to this feeling, for the women liberationists in the class would often respond to them either abruptly or impatiently.

I think what precipitated these students' anxiety was a role reversal for them as male students at Stanford. Generally, in most history and political science colloquia at the university men outnumber women anywhere from two to one to five to one. (In the general student body men outnumber women two to one.)

For the first time in these men's university experiences they were not only in a minority, but a frighteningly small minority, which made a second element in the class more difficult to handle. Not only were they a minority, but they were in a situation in which they did not possess a naturally assumed authority because of their sex. In history and political science, disciplines which usually explore such traditionally male activities as war, politics, and power, it is somehow assumed by both men and women that these are subjects which men "innately" understand better than women. Thus women, because they are usually in a minority and outside their "natural" sphere, tend to participate less. In the feminism class, however, things were quite the opposite, and a number of women made it clear that women, by their very nature, possessed special insights into the problems of women and that men could never understand the quality of woman's subordination, either historically or contemporarily, because they were the oppressors. By their very womanhood, women possessed a bond with Elizabeth Cady Stanton which men were incapable of understanding, for only the oppressed could understand the oppressed.

The small groups wandering off to the Coffee House should have alleviated some of the strain in the colloquia, but after doing it twice, neither class did it again. This was unfortunate, for many of the students found that these groups gave them the opportunity to discuss questions about feminism and women which they failed to bring up in class because they felt slightly intimidated by the radical liberationists. At the same time it gave them an opportunity to meet their classmates, which they usually didn't do, some for their entire time, at Stanford. Several students mentioned these small groups in their journals as the best feature of the class. These groups were not purposely discontinued, but it just happened that discussions in the colloquia were usually so involved that there was never time for the small groups. In the future, I will make time.

The role-playing session was successful for one section and fell flat for the second one. (The encounter session never took place since no one could define precisely what they wanted.) Two weeks before the last formal class meeting I distributed a list of about twenty-odd men and women, both historical and fictional, from which I asked each student to choose one who seemed to be the opposite of himself or herself in real life. Thus radical women chose conservatives such as Sarah Hale and conservatives, women like Emma Goldman. Men were asked to choose women, and, oddly enough, a number of men wanted to play Stephen Crane's prostitute, Maggie.

The first session was immensely successful and playful, in large part because only six students came. (Attendance was required neither here nor in class.) The meeting opened somewhat comically since "Frances Willard" began it with a prayer and call for temperance with a glass of wine in her hand, which was passed off amongst the "ladies" as grape juice. The issue soon centered around the need for temperance because alcohol was intimately tied up with sensuality and male lust, an issue which "Olive Chancellor" believed to be paramount. "Edna Pointellier" (whom I played), because she was not directly involved in politics, did not participate directly in the political aspects of the meeting, but chided her "husband" for the emptiness of her life. "Maggie" (played by another man), however, remained aloof since woman's rights had little concern for the lower class, which was just as well, since the women present sneered at

her because of her immorality. There were indignation, anger, and helplessness in the meeting, all played with a serious lightness. Some found a genuine compassion for the people they played, for in preparing for the role, in their background reading--either autobiography or fiction, they sought to understand the personal dynamics of their characters.

The second meeting was less successful, possibly because there were fifteen students present, which made it difficult for a number of them to participate actively. In many respects it was like a formal classroom discussion, except that the participants were from another century. It was altogether too stiff.

As I suggested earlier, I feel somewhat ambiguous about the success of these colloquia, at least in terms of each group finding a group identity or gestalt. In part the colloquia failed to come together as a cooperative venture because the barriers, especially in the evening colloquium, were too great to overcome. In part, some of its failure as a cooperative effort in learning was due to ambiguities within myself.

The two colloquia were remarkably different in tone because the afternoon class had only two radicals in it (a man and a woman who attended infrequently since they had been busted at a sit-in), while almost half of the women in the evening colloquium were involved in women's liberation. The discussions in the afternoon class were quieter in tone, less rhetorical, and certainly less intense than those in the evening class simply because there was little diversity in views on woman's role. The students believed in equal economic rights for women, but very few believed that it was necessary to restructure basic male/female relations or roles to the degree that the women in the evening class believed. While these students were more conservative about their attitudes toward sex roles, they were also more traditional in their student/teacher relation. I think this was important because of my earlier defensiveness about leading the class discussion.

There was no real challenge to my leading the afternoon colloquium; in the evening one, however, the situation was quite different, for there had been some conflict between myself and several of the students about how the class would be organized, which left some undercurrent of resentment between myself and some of the radical women. It had made me defensive, particularly because the women who challenged me were personal friends of mine. I had consciously attempted to dissolve the student/teacher dichotomy because I believed that such dichotomies interfered with learning, which, I think, gave out confusing signals to the students, for I would sometimes fall back into the teacher role by gesture or intonation. This division, in turn, contributed to the solidifying of division among the students between male/female and radical/conservative lines. Half the women in the class were radical, the other half conservative, and three of the four men liberal with the fourth a Yippie. Perhaps even if the student/teacher dichotomy did not exist, the sense of group may never have existed in the class.

The women involved in women's liberation in the evening class tended to dominate the discussion, partly because they had usually thought the material through more thoroughly than the others, partly because they had a coherent ideology whereas the others had only piecemeal opinions, and partly because

their views and personalities slightly intimidated the more conservative women. They all knew one another to varying degrees and could consequently count on support from their friends if they were challenged. If the radical women dominated the class discussion, they did it, however, at the expense of alienating a number of their classmates, for if an alternative point of view were offered it was soon overwhelmed by either numbers or rhetoric.

This conflict between the radical women and the men and conservative women was avoided, however, at the last class meeting which I had set aside for a discussion of contemporary women's liberation, which was to be led by Marty Hale and several other radical women. For the first time, questions and even resentments which the other students had were discussed by the liberationists: who were these women, why did they dress the way they did, what went on in women's affinity groups, what were their feelings about men, and so forth? These questions underlay a significant portion of the hostility which the class felt toward the radical women. The radicals until that moment had remained alien, unknown, and somehow dangerous figures to many in the class; unfortunately, that was the last formal class meeting of the quarter. With a patience and lack of rhetoric which had been absent previously, they carefully outlined point by point what they wanted changed in society. Questions and answers were open, friendly, and changed the feelings of a number of women who had previously felt anger toward women's liberation. Although none of the conservative women believed that they would ever become involved in women's liberation themselves, they left the class with a sympathy toward the movement which they had previously lacked.

As the quarter drew to a close I found myself wondering how I would ever give the students grades, for the class was far more than a simple academic exercise that could be measured by the usual crude standards. The only written work which I had were the journals and they were hardly a basis for grades, not only because I had said that I would not grade them, but because they were often so personal, so intimate, so rambling, I was not even able to return them with the comments that I had promised. At the first meeting I had told them that I had wanted to avoid grade scrambling, so everyone who turned in the journals would receive at least a "B." (I hardly need point out that such a policy would not avoid academic competitiveness--it was a half-hearted measure.) By the end of the quarter, I realized that I had no way of judging the students, if, indeed, they should even be judged. Since I had emphasized the affective importance of the course in terms of attitude change, was I then to give those students who changed their minds about their sex identities "A's" and those who did not "B's"?

I finally decided that students were to listen to a tape from an early class, evaluate what had been happening in the course as well as themselves, and to give themselves grades which I would then turn into the History Department. I asked, however, that they explain their reasons for giving themselves the grades they did, hoping that they would consider in some depth what constituted a genuine education. Thirty-seven turned in their last journals with their grades. I was amazed: there were thirty-six "A's" and one "Pass," from a student who, by traditional standards, deserved an "A." I was angry because few took the trouble to explain why they believed they should receive "A's" and even fewer paused to consider the question of education. I felt they were

ripping me off, but I was also wondering what would come down on me from the History Department when I turned in a grade sheet of almost solid "A's." (When no one was looking I slipped the sheet into the middle of a huge stack of other grade sheets on the secretary's desk.)

Those who did evaluate themselves, especially the conservative women, often said that the course was significant in making them reconsider traditional roles and that if education was to have any significance it was to be existentially important. Others gave themselves "A's" because they didn't believe in the grading system and that this was one way to undermine it, while one man said that a professor had once asked his class to grade themselves, he gave himself a "B" after much soul-searching, found out that his was the only "B" in the class, and resolved never to let that happen again.

Leaving the whole matter of grades aside, what, then, appears to have been learned in the class, both by the students and myself? Intellectually, the students appeared to have generally grasped the main trends and ideas of American feminism, which they went on to interpret essentially as a conservative, middle-class movement which had failed to challenge basic sex roles. This interpretation met a good deal of resistance from the radical women originally, because they were looking for the historical antecedents of contemporary women's liberation. Nineteenth-century suffragists were ideologically alien to their vision of women's liberation, for they were xenophobic, racist, and middle class. Yet, oddly enough--and this is a point which I did not completely understand--even though the radical women found little ideological affinity with the earlier feminists, they nevertheless continued to feel a common bond of "sisterhood" with them. Perhaps the answer lies in what one woman in the class, Linda Durbin, pointed out to me: both were in rebellion against male authority, which is the first step toward authenticity. It was in this sense that the radical women found a "past."

The greatest impact on the students' individual concepts of self occurred with the conservative women. (The radical women had already challenged the stereotypes long before they had enrolled in this course.) Several of them had written in their journals that until the colloquia began they had been unaware of the psychological (as opposed to the economic) limitations placed on themselves because of their sex. They began to recognize "male chauvinism" in television commercials, in their relations with men, and in the way their fathers related to their mothers. I doubt very much if this would have occurred in the course had it not been for the presence of the radical women, for they consistently discussed the psychological disabilities placed on women.

Finally, what of myself? I think my anger about the grades demonstrates something which teachers who plan to teach a course open-endedly should keep in mind: if one offers freedom to his students genuinely, then he must not maintain any set of expectations of his students, for they are free agents to do as they wish. In the colloquia it was more or less understood that the students were free to do whatever amount of work they wanted. Generally, because the subject was inherently interesting, they did. If some did not, there is no reason for the teacher to be disappointed, as I was, for then he is offering the student an ambiguous kind of freedom. I offered the students freedom

expecting, because they were no longer constrained in a traditional manner, that they would, out of some kind of gratitude, I suppose, work and grade themselves conscientiously: I was substituting moral coercion for academic coercion. I was angry about the grades because the moral coercion had failed. But it had failed to achieve traditional goals: to get the student to do the work and to get it graded responsibly. Only my means were unconventional, not my goals.

I think some of the difficulties in the colloquia arose from this confusion on my part. I had never taught experimentally before and my ends and means were, in fact, in conflict with one another. If one is to teach openly, then it must be open, rather than a disguised closedness, for it gives not only students but yourself confused signals and expectations. One cannot be disappointed if the students do not do as one wishes.

Secondly, what about a man teaching woman's history? This was a point about which I was particularly sensitive since I was a man teaching woman's history. I think that it <u>is</u> a subject best taught by women, for two reasons. First, I think that it is somewhat anomalous for a male teacher to be the final authority on questions relating to women. Even though he is the final "authority" (in the classroom) by virtue of his being the teacher who has the last say, he is also a male, and the two--his being a male and his being a teacher--become indistinguishable, at least in practice. In such cases it is possible that conflict may be encouraged along male/female lines which would make it difficult to establish a congenial atmosphere of mutual learning. Secondly, I do not think that a male teacher can quite understand the psychological implications of woman's historical subordination, since that has not been his experience. Certainly I would not have brought it up were it not for the radical women in the course.

Finally, I might close by observing that while most students considered the course successful, I left it with mixed feelings, but that was because I had such great expectations of what might be accomplished by a course experimentally taught. One should have no expectations of what might happen in an open-ended, experimental course, for that is exactly what it is, open-ended and experimental. There is both success and failure in it, and I was prepared only for success.

Stanford University

THE ARTHUR AND ELIZABETH SCHLESINGER LIBRARY ON THE HISTORY OF WOMEN IN AMERICA, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

by Ann Douglas Wood

In 1943 Maud Wood Park, a noted suffragist, gave to Radcliffe College a collection of 1,167 folders of papers, pamphlets and books relating to the women's rights movement in America. In the subsequent decade under the care of two historians, Wilbur K. Jordan, then president of Radcliffe, and Arthur Schlesinger, who in 1922 had criticized historians' assumption that "one half of our population have been negligible factors in our country's history," the collection was greatly expanded and established as an independent research resource.

Today the Schlesinger Library offers one of the largest collections in the world of source material on the history of American women from 1800 to the present. The contents of the collection include over 10,000 volumes, some 200 major collections of papers of individual American women, 31 archives of important women's organizations, 200 small personal collections and the records of 18 small organizations. Furthermore, the Library has a fine collection of paintings and photographs of eminent American women (the famous portraits of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lucy Stone deserve special notice) as well as a number of posters and placards from every phase of the women's suffrage movement in America.

Compared to any other library, the Schlesinger Library appears strong in virtually every phase of American women's history. Nonetheless, Janet W. James, former director of the archives, wrote in 1969 that the dominant theme of the collection was "woman's part in the American concern for social justice," and this by and large holds true. The Library is especially strong on women in the areas of labor, medicine, social organizations, and every kind of reform movement. It has deliberately chosen to limit itself in the field of the arts, and possesses no major collection of papers by a literary woman unless, as in the case of Harriet Beecher Stowe, or Lydia Maria Child, she was also involved in reform activities. It holds autobiographies and biographies of many important women writers and of many insignificant ones, but owns only a few of the works of any given writer.

The collection can be divided into eight categories, each of which consists of books, both primary and secondary, magazines and newspapers, and manuscripts. It should be emphasized that in each category I am listing only works and collections that seem to be of special interest and by no means covering all the Library's holdings.

1. Suffrage and Women's Rights: This comprises books and papers on every phase of the movement. Probably the most important unpublished material is found in the Charlotte Perkins Gilman papers, recently acquired by the Library from Mrs. Gilman's only daughter. This huge collection, which will probably be catalogued and open to the public in the late spring of 1972, consists of personal letters, diaries and unpublished MSS. The Dillon Collection of some 24 cartons of material containing part of the papers of Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, organizers of the later suffrage movement, is also extremely

valuable. Furthermore, large portions of the papers of suffragists Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone and Doris Stevens (Jailed for Freedom) are also here. The Library has complete copies of most of the famous women's rights journals and newspapers including Elizabeth Cady Stanton's The Revolution, Lucy Stone's Woman's Journal, Amelia Bloomer's The Lily, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Forerunner, and the National Woman's Party's organ, Equal Rights. Collections of women's political organizations, most notably the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, are also represented in strength.

2. Social Reform and the Professions: Papers and books on nineteenth century social movements, like abolitionism, are particularly strong. The Alma Lutz Collection offers some of the papers of Marie Weston Chapman (abolitionist) and Prudence Crandall (early school teacher of blacks). The Beecher Papers, one of the Library's larger holdings, include the papers of Harriet Beecher Stowe and of many members of her family. The Loring Papers offer contemporary accounts of abolitionism and transcendentalism and have many letters by Lydia Maria Child. The Caroline Dall Papers include accounts of Margaret Fuller's Conversations. In the area of social work, the Library has the papers of Ethel Sturges Dummer of Chicago, active on many social fronts, the papers of Jane Addams on microfilm, a series of letters to and from Dorothea Dix, prison and asylum reformer, the complete papers of Miriam Van Waters, Superintendent at the women's prison in Framingham, Massachusetts, which include many interesting letters to her from prisoners. The papers of numerous settlement houses, most notably the North Bennet Street Industrial School, Denison House, and Rutland Corner House, are also here. The book collection of the Library in the area of women's education is excellent, and papers in this field include those of individual reformers like Catharine Esther Beecher and Elizabeth Agassiz, who founded Radcliffe, and the records of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, founded in 1882. The topic of women and religion is represented by many books on feminine ministers, missionaries, and religious activists as well as by a large collection of the papers of Olympia Brown and Antoinette Brown Blackwell, two of the first women ministers.

3. Labor Organizations: Another very strong area. The Library holds the complete papers of Leonora O'Reilly, radical organizer for the Women's Trade Union League, of Frieda Miller, an Industrial Commissioner in New York, and of Esther Peterson, recently a Consumer Official under Johnson. From an earlier period, the Library's most valuable holdings are probably the Harriet H. Robinson papers and the Lucy Larcom letters. Both of these women were operators in the early days of the Lowell factories and contributors to the Lowell Offering. Periodicals include among others Life and Labor, the organ of the Women's Trade Union League.

4. Medicine: The Library's holdings here are sufficiently extensive to warrant a separate category. There are numerous old marriage manuals and books covering every aspect of women and medicine. MS collections include the complete papers of Mary Putnam Jacobi, an early woman doctor, large portions of the papers of Elizabeth Blackwell and her sister Emily, and the papers of more recent doctors, most notably Alice Hamilton, who specialized in industrial poisoning, and Martha Eliot (once Chief of the Children's Bureau). Recently the Library has acquired the papers of the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Company (this does not include her own personal papers), and is presently cataloguing them.

5. Art and Literature: As already mentioned, this is the Library's weakest area, but it does hold the papers of two well-known American nineteenth-century actesses, Clara Morris and Charlotte Cushman, as well as a major collection of an American artist, Harriet Hosmer, a nineteenth-century sculptress. Published biographical material and secondary sources in the area, however, are well represented.

6. Work at Home and in Volunteer Associations: The Library has an extensive collection of cookbooks, and is currently receiving the papers of Julia Child and M. F. K. Fisher. Etiquette books also constitute a major holding, and many of the best know women's magazines (Godey's Lady's Book [almost complete through 1870], Ladies' Home Journal, Woman's Day, and more recently Vogue, Mademoiselle, Photoplay and True Romance) are here. Numerous books on motherhood, the home, and child care can be found here also. There are extensive collections of the papers of various women's clubs, perhaps most notably Julia Ward Howe's Saturday Morning Club and the League of Women for Community Service, Boston's oldest black women's club. The papers of Abby W. May, pioneer in the woman's club movement, are here. Papers of the League of Women Voters (National, Massachusetts, and certain locals), the Consumers League, and most recently N.O.W. can also be found here.

7. Daily Life: This includes primarily unpublished material, letters and diaries, by unknown as well as famous women. 260 volumes of Dana Family diaries (1829-1937) record the daily life of the women of this family. The Hugh Cabot Family Collection like the Poor Family Collection also offers valuable accounts of social life in New England during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Hooker Collection consists of 300 miscellaneous letters by nineteenth-century American women. Of special interest are two memoirs by black women, Claudia W. Harreld and Julia H. Smith, and the diary of Daisy H. Davies with a minute account of her experience during the depression.

8. Women's Liberation Today: The Library is collecting published material of every description, including underground newspapers and pamphlets, as well as television scripts from relevant programs. Betty Friedan has donated her papers (including extensive correspondence about The Feminine Mystique), which the Library is now in the process of cataloguing.

To do work in the Library is easy, pleasant, and inspirational. Working conditions are extremely good: typewriters are provided, the air-conditioning usually works, and the chairs are comfortable. The Library is open 9-4 Monday through Friday and anyone may use its resources free of charge. All the books are on open stacks, while the magazines and MS material must be specially called for. Nothing may be taken from the Library, but the researcher is allowed to take a desk and keep all the needed materials on it for an indefinite period. Research is facilitated in every possible way. Relevant books on women owned by the Harvard Libraries but not by the Schlesinger Library are cross-listed, all the most recent books on women are kept in a special place, and the organization of the books by subject (for example, women in education, or women nurses) means that it is possible to use the shelves as offering a rough bibliography on any given topic. The four principal staff members are not only well-informed on many aspects of the collection and the history it represents, but are friendly

and helpful in the extreme. Ms. Jeannette Cheek, the director, is an expert in the field of women and labor, and takes part in shaping new directions in women's history. Ms. Elizabeth O. Shenton, Ms. Cheek's assistant, answers numerous written requests for information and photocopying among other things. Ms. Barbara Haber, Curator of Printed Books, has worked in current women's programs and makes a special point of telling visiting researchers what other scholars are doing in the same area. Ms. Diane Dorsey, Curator of MSS, is responsible for the meticulous cataloguing of new MSS. Through the presence of these four women as well as the company of other women scholars using the Library, the Schlesinger Library has the atmosphere of a community of women. The researcher who works there not only learns about American women, but feels united with them.

Princeton University

THE SOPHIA SMITH COLLECTION
SMITH COLLEGE LIBRARY, NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01060

"The Sophia Smith Collection, named in honor of the founder of Smith College, was established in 1942 as a special project of the Friends of the Smith College Library. It is today a major research facility containing thousands of books, manuscripts, pamphlets, miscellanea, and periodicals that relate to women's social and intellectual history.... While the Sophia Smith Collection contains primary and secondary sources that document the history of the world's women throughout several centuries, its principal holdings date from 1865.

Preservation of collections and continued acquisition of pertinent sources are constant concerns of the staff...

Since many collections are unrestricted, they are readily accessible to adult visitors. No material circulates, but during regular weekday hours researchers may examine sources in carrels located near open stacks. Whenever possible, the staff attempts to answer, by mail, a limited number of research requests.

Miss Sophia Smith believed that well-educated women could help to reform the evils of society and that 'as teachers, as writers, as mothers, as members of society, their power for good would be incalculably enlarged.' The research collection that bears her name contains conclusive evidence of women's activities and accomplishments throughout history."

From the Introduction to the Catalog of the Sophia Smith Collection, edited by Mary-Elizabeth Murdock, Director, and the staff. The following information is based on the same catalog.

Holdings

I. Manuscript Collections

1. Family papers

Brewster Family Papers, 1883-1927. Sisters teaching in Northampton.
Bush-Brown Family Papers, 1835-1969. Sculptors, painters.
Garrison Family Papers, 1830 to date. "Largest single collection of personal papers contains thousands of letters and other primary sources (1838 to date) that document family's continual involvement through several generations in politics, business, art, literature, religion, education, and nearly every major U.S. 19th and 20th century reform." Correspondents include Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
Grant Family Papers, 1795-1883. Farmers, teachers, bankers, businessmen.
Hale Family Papers, 1780 to date. Ca. 105 boxes of materials including MSS., diaries, letters. Major figures are Lucretia Peabody Hale (1820-1900), Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909), and Susan Hale (1833-1910), as well as other members of the Hale and Everett families.

Hudson Family Papers, 1805-1880.
Hunt Family Papers, ca. 1841-1903. Suffrage activities.
Peabody Family Papers, 1804-1894. "'Cultivated' 19th century Salem-Boston ladies."
Pearce Family Papers, 1880-1962. Teachers, librarians, educational missionaries in Near East.
Upton Family Papers, 1876-1937. Professional and academic women.
Wead Family Papers. Civil War.

2. Suffragists

Blanche A. Ames; Susan B. Anthony; Vera Beggs; Lillie D. Blake; Carrie Chapman Catt; Ethel Eyre Dreier; Isabel Howland; Rhoda E. McCulloch; Josephine Schain; Caroline Severance; Florence Tuttle; Alice Wright.

3. Women and medicine

Clara Barton; Louise Bryant; Connie Guion; Ruth Hemenway; Margaret Long; Mabel Mendenhall; New England Hospital (pioneer hospital for women and children, est. 1863, Boston, and staffed by women M.D.'s); Beatrice Powers; Florence Sabin; Alice Tallant; Emma Walker; Emma Ward.

4. Women and the arts

Marian Anderson; Josephine Bacon (writer); Mary Beard; Ernestine Carey (writer); Kate Clark (writer); Nancy Cushman (sculptor, writer); Agnes de Mille; Sophie H. Drinker (musicologist); Frances Huntingdon (writer of children's books); Martha Lamb (writer, editor); Eva LeGallienne; Abby Merchant (playwright); Clara Morris (actress); Sara Payson Parton ("Fanny Fern," writer); Risë Stevens.

5. Women and social reform

Jane Addams; Dorothy Brush (birth control); Madeleine Doty (child welfare); Emma Goldman; Mary C. Jarrett (mental hygiene); Ellen Richards (home economics); Florence Rose (birth control); Margaret Sanger (191 boxes of original MSS., letters, and printed sources); Vida Scudder (settlement houses); Ellen Starr (co-founder of Hull House); Ida Tarbell.

II. Subject Collections

Birth control; civil liberties; education; humanities; peace; professions; missionary work; suffrage; anti-suffrage; women in industry; women's liberation; women's rights.

III. Periodicals

Over one hundred American and foreign periodicals dealing with "the social and intellectual history of the world's women" are represented in the collection.

OTHER SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ON WOMEN IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES[1]

Scripps College Library
Claremont, California 91711
Librarian: Ms. Sybil M. Fielder

Macpherson Collection contains "books by and about significant women. There are four main fields of emphasis: Woman Suffrage; History of Domestic Employment; Women in the Westward Movement; and Women in the Humanist Tradition." Special interest in Women "Firsts" in California.

Northwestern University Library
Evanston, Illinois 60201
Librarian: Ms. Roxanna Seifer

Extensive collection of women's liberation literature, including current pamphlets, posters, magazines, newspapers, and newsletters published in the United States, England, and Australia.

University of Kansas Library
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Gerritsen Collection of "La Femme et la Feminisme." About 4,000 volumes; strong only in late 19th and early 20th century materials.

Boston Public Library
Copley Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02117
Librarian: James Lawton, Curator of Manuscripts

"The Galatea Collection," assembled by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and relating to women's place in history, and the suffrage movement. About 5,000 volumes; a few manuscripts. Emphasis is literary; collection includes material on education, the professions, religion, domestic employment. Catalog published in 1898.

---

[1] Although this is not a comprehensive listing of holdings on women, we offer it as a beginning. The bulk of the information in these listings is based on Subject Collections, 3rd edition, compiled by Lee Ash and Denis Lorenz, New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967, and used by permission of R. R. Bowker (a Xerox Company), 1180 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10036. Postpaid price $23.50 net. The 4th edition of Subject Collections will be available in 1972.

Additional information has been compiled through discussion, correspondence, and publications. We would like to acknowledge the help of Laura X, Women's History Research Library; the Boston Public Library; Roxanna Seifer, Northwestern University Library; Scripps College Library; Zion Memorial Library; and the Barnard Women's Center.

Zion Research Library
771 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
Librarian: Ms. Wilma Corcoran

This "nonsectarian protestant research library for study of the Bible and history of the Christian Church" has a small collection on women and the church, donated by Alma Lutz.

Library of Congress
Washington, D. C. 20540

Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and National American Woman Suffrage Association collections.

Business & Professional Women's Foundation Library
2012 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Books, MSS., microfilms, pamphlets and clippings devoted to women in contemporary American society.

Friends Historical Library
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

Lucretia Mott Collection; about 400 MS. pieces by Quaker anti-slavery worker who was also involved with women's rights.

Hamilton Library
Elmira College
Elmira, New York 14901

Collection of "Genteel Women's Reading, 1855-1955."

The National Woman's Party Library
144 Constitution Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D. C.

About 3,000 volumes; MSS., maps, slides.

Frances E. Willard Memorial Library for Alcohol Research
National Women's Christian Temperance Union
1730 Chicago Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201

History and archives of WCTU.

Rudolph Matas Medical Library
Tulane University
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Elizabeth Bass Collection; women in medicine.

Women's Medical College Library
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19129

Collection on women in medicine presented to the College by the American Medical Women's Association.

Mary J. Drexel Library
Lutheran Deaconess School
801 Merion Square Road
Gladwyne, Pennsylvania 19035

Women in the church; complete minutes of Lutheran Deaconess Conference of America.

Young Women's Christian Association National Board Library
600 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Women in the contemporary world.

Thomas F. Holgate Library
Bennett College
Greensboro, North Carolina 27420

Clippings about Afro-American women.

Women's History Research Center Library
2325 Oak Street
Berkeley, California 94708

"A research, lending, corresponding and selling library of women's literature; books, periodicals, pamphlets, bibliographies, articles, clippings, tapes, and pictures. Topics include women in countries, specific women, roles, subjects, women in history, action projects, specific men's statements on women, work done by women using it.

A running catalog including addresses to order material is available."

Westbrook Junior College Library
Portland, Maine 04103

Writings of Maine women.

Connecticut College Library
New London, Connecticut 06320

Women in Connecticut.

Georgia State College for Women Library
Milledgeville, Georgia 31061

Published writings of Georgia women.

Lipscomb Library
Randolph-Macon Women's College
Lynchburg, Virginia 24504

Published writings of Virginia women.

Barnard College Library
New York, New York 10027

The Overbury Collection contains about 1900 volumes, including unique editions of books by American women writers; and nearly a thousand related MSS. and letters.

Private collection
Ann D. Wood
59 Wiggins Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

About 1,000 volumes, mainly primary sources, relating to women's history in America 1800-1914.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ON WOMEN WRITERS IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

A

Adams, Leonie. Library of Congress; University of Chicago.
Addams, Jane. Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois; Harvard; Swarthmore College.
Alcott, Louisa May. Harvard; Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Mass.
Aldington, Hilda ("H.D."). University of Chicago; Harvard.
Anderson, Margaret. University of Chicago.
Atherton, Gertrude. Library of Congress; Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, Ind.
Austen, Jane. Pierpont Morgan Library; NYPL.
Austin, Mary Hunter. University of Chicago; Bobbs-Merrill Co.

B

Beach, Sylvia. Princeton.
Bradstreet, Anne. NYPL.
Brontes. Princeton; Pierpont Morgan; NYPL (Berg Collection).
Broughton, Rhoda. UCLA.
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. Scripps College; University of California, Davis; Mills College; Yale; Boston Public Library; Harvard; Wellesley; Pierpont Morgan Library; NYPL (Berg); Ohio Wesleyan University; Baylor University.

C

Craigie, Pearl ("John Oliver Hobbes"). NYPL (Berg).

D

Deland, Margaret. Colby College.
De la Roche, Mazo. University of Toronto.
Deutsch, Babette. University of Chicago; Washington University.
Dodge. Mary Mapes. Library of Congress.

E

Eliot, George. Yale; Princeton.

F

Fuller, Margaret. Yale; Concord Free Public Library
Fullerton, Georgiana. UCLA.

G

Gale, Zona. University of Chicago; Bobbs-Merrill.
Glasgow, Ellen. University of Virginia.
Glyn, Elinor. Lee Ash (private, 31 Alden Road, New Haven, Connecticut).
Gore, Catherine. UCLA.

J

Jewett, Sarah Orne. Portland Public Library, Portland, Maine; Colby College Library; Syracuse University.
Johnston, Mary. University of Virginia.

L

Laurence, Margaret. McMaster University.
Linton, Eliza Lynn. UCLA.
Luhan, Mabel Dodge. Yale; University of Chicago.

M

McGinley, Phyllis. Syracuse University.
Manning, Ann. UCLA.
Martineau, Harriet. UCLA.
Marsh, Anne. UCLA.
Maxwell, Mary E. (Braddon). UCLA; Princeton.
Meynell, Alice. Boston College.
Mitford, Mary. UCLA.
Mitchell, Margaret. Atlanta Public Library; Harvard.
Monroe, Harriet. University of Chicago; Harvard.
Moore, Marianne. Harvard.
Morgan, Sydney. UCLA.
Mott, Lucretia. Swarthmore.
Mulock, Dinah. UCLA; Princeton.
Murfee, Mary N. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

N

Nin, Anais. Northwestern University
Norton, Caroline. Yale.

O

"Ouida" (Louise de la Ramee). Princeton.

P

Paget, Violet ("Vernon Lee"). Colby College
Porter, Katherine Anne. Yale; University of Maryland.
Potter, Beatrix. Free Library of Philadelphia.

R

Richardson, Dorothy. Yale.
Roberts, Elizabeth M. University of Kentucky.

S

Sigourney, Lydia. University of Chicago.
Spark, Muriel. Washington University.
Stein, Gertrude. Yale; Northwestern.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Berkeley; Hartford Public Library; Johns Hopkins; Harvard.
Swenson, May. Washington University; Scripps College.

W

Ward, Mrs. Humphrey. Claremont Colleges.
Welty, Eudora. University of Chicago.
West, Rebecca. Yale.
Wharton, Edith. Berkeley; Yale; University of Chicago; Ohio State University.
Wiggins, Kate Douglass. Bowdoin College; Portland Public Library, Portland, Maine.
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler. University of Chicago.
Wilder, Laura Inglass. Pomona Public Library.
Wood, Mrs. Henry. UCLA.
Woolf, Virginia. NYPL (Berg).

Y

Yonge, Charlotte. Harvard; Princeton.

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
ANTHOLOGIES OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

by Ella Kusnetz and Carol Ohmann

Masculine/Feminine: Readings in Sexual Mythology and the Liberation of Women, ed. Betty Roszak and Theodore Roszak. Harper Colophon Books, 1969. $2.45, paper.

This book is an excellent introductory anthology of traditional 19th and 20th century theoretical writing on the "woman question." As in any collection of this sort the offerings are drastically abridged, but here the editors have used taste and intelligence. The first section, aptly entitled "The Male Problem," gives a good sample of the kinds of prejudice expressed when Nietzsche, Strindberg, Freud, and more recently Robert Graves and Lionel Tiger hold forth on the subject of the second sex. The messages are consistent in tone--self-assured, cocky--and wildly varied in substance. Woman is all nature and intuition, the angel, the civilizer of men; or she is irrational and hopelessly neurotic, the "vampire wife," the venus castrata, the scourge of mankind.

The next section of the book includes writing by men who first brought some sanity to the subject of women; Shaw and Havelock Ellis are the most valuable. A selection from an English political scientist, Ronald V. Sampson, is a poor paraphrase of John Stuart Mill, and points up why this section is flawed: The Subjection of Women says it all, and better. Still, these pieces are valuable read alongside Mill. At the end, Theodore Roszak includes himself among the ranks of these "male allies" with an aggressively right-minded condemnation of the Mailer-Hemingway "blood and guts" aesthetic and the politics of "Wargasm."

The second half of the book is given over to feminist writing, and there are excerpts from early, seminal works, such as Ruth Herschberger's Adam's Rib and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, and from some of the writings that have come out of the new feminism of the 60's. In this last section, articles intended by the editors to indicate present trends in feminism have already, in the few months since the book was published, become dated. The emphasis is political and radical: there are selections from Juliet Mitchell and Marlene Dixon, both New Left academics (Mitchell's "The Longest Revolution," a very difficult neo-Marxist analysis is still, by the way, one of the most widely read pieces of the English movement) and several statements and manifestos from radical students and young women who left their male-dominated organizations to work for their own revolution. The final chapters of the book provide a marvelous measure of the extent to which, by contrast, the women's liberation movement has recently turned inward, away from political analysis.

E.K.

Female Liberation: History and Current Politics, ed. Roberta Salper. Knopf, 1971. $3.50, paper.

The first section of this anthology, titled "History and Background," offers selections from classical theoreticians of the rights of women: Mary

Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor Mill, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, as well as selections by other historical figures whose concern with feminism was allied to more general political goals: Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Emma Goldman, Ella Reeve Bloor. In addition to highlighting a developing feminist ideology, this section calls attention to four movements that contributed crucially to the first phase of feminism in the United States: suffrage, abolition, Marxism, trade unionism. But the editor's intention is not simply to inform readers about the nineteenth-century women's rights movement, but to evaluate it. Salper argues that "the [19th century] movement fell apart [because] it failed to integrate the goals of white middle-class women with those of the working class," and, also, because "it did not recognize that both personal and political oppression must be fought if one is striving to make radical changes in both economic structures and human beings."

In line with this evaluation the book is consistently and coherently radical in its politics. The three original, as well as most important, essays in the second part, which is titled "The New Feminism," all urge the linking of efforts toward Women's Liberation to the goal of socialist revolution. Salper's own "1967-1971" traces a number of significant theories and events that have characterized the contemporary women's movement. Marlene Dixon in "Why Women's Liberation--2?" analyzes faults in the contemporary movement, urging women away from a mystical reliance on "sisterhood" to a tough-minded recognition that "revolutionary social change must occur before there can be a significant improvement in the social position of all women." Kate Ellis, in "Politics of Day Care," warns that even day care centers can be co-opted, reinforcing the present system rather than contributing to liberation from it.

Female Liberation should be useful in a variety of women's studies courses. Even readers who may resist its viewpoint should be helped through its own ideological coherence to clarify their own generalizations about contemporary feminism.

The book is unusually attractive in format. The photographs, spaced throughout, of women past and present insist that, despite their fairly relentless theorizing, the essays finally pertain to the quality of individual lives, to human beings.

C.O.

Up Against the Wall, Mother...: On Women's Liberation, ed. Elsie Adams and Mary Louise Briscoe. Glencoe Press, 1971. $4.95, $2.95, both paper.

The editors begin their introduction with a firm judgment and a firm commitment to Women's Liberation: "Women are oppressed. They are oppressed today and have been oppressed throughout the history of Western civilization."

The initial section of the book, titled overall "The Traditional View of Women," is concerned to put forth, though not without a combative chorus of other voices answering back, a series of myths that have received repeated statement and won repeated assent. The sub-divisions of the section speak to the nature of the intent: "The Second Sex," "Woman-as-Object," "Woman-as-Enemy," "Der ewige Weibliche." While there is conceptual overlap here, the sub-divisions mean to stress different emphases in the kinds of treatment women have traditionally received. The first grouping, "The Second Sex," offers selections from Genesis,

from a Jewish prayer, from Leviticus, from Catholic writing on women, from Paradise Lost, from a book on the treatment of Elizabethan women, from Freud, and, finally, the counter-voice, Paula Stern in an essay titled "The Womanly Image: Character Assassination through the Ages." The range of writing here alone offers proof of the opening statements of the introduction. The emphasis, so far, has been on women as afterthought, second thought, second best. The remaining sub-divisions stress what the editors term "concomitant myths," further ones linked to, perhaps engendered by, the one of the second sex. To quote the introduction again, "Although their status as an inferior ('the weaker vessel'; 'the second sex') or as an object (the body beautiful; the body bountiful) is clearly subordinate to that of men, women have often found themselves put on pedestals and literally worshipped for supra-human--and dehumanizing--attributes. This paradox of subjection venerated has, in turn, widened the distance between the sexes and brought about the myth of the Mystery of Woman, which is a direct adjunct to the equally pernicious myth of Woman-The-Enemy, because it is a particular property of mysteries to both fascinate and terrify."

Subsequent sections offer a look at realities that lie behind myths, while stressing that myth has so obscured sight that realities have very much yet to be fully found (and the readings here offer ideological ground-breakers, e.g. Mill, Shaw, Koedt, Weisstein); a survey of modes of adjustment to myths, and the costliness of such adjustment (one group of readings pertains to women married, a second to women working); lastly, a section titled "Toward Freedom" offers, still along with historical selections, a number of movement pieces that speak for the right to, and the possibility of, new freedoms, new self-realizations for women.

The selections in this anthology are eclectic, in time of composition and in kind, from the Bible to Doris Lessing, from religion, history, literature, sociology, political theory, pop culture. Interdisciplinary as the book is, though, worth mentioning are the number of inclusions from literature. (Besides Genesis and Milton, Aristophanes, Apuleius, Spenser, Shakespeare, Goethe, Swinburne, D. G. Rossetti, Ibsen, Shaw, Synge, Lawrence, Lewis, Graves, Woolf, Parker, Brooks, Sexton, Lessing.)

The anthology should be useful in a number of kinds of women's studies courses; the instructor could construct from it courses with various emphases, though she would probably want to supplement any particular kind of selections with more extensive or complete readings, i.e. the theorist will probably want to read more Mill, the teacher of literature, while content with the stories by, for example, Lawrence and Lessing (Lessing's "To Room Nineteen" is otherwise out of print), will probably not be satisfied with brief excerpts from A Doll's House and a single poem of Anne Sexton's.

C.O.

Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran. Basic Books, Inc., 1971. $12.50, cloth.

The enthusiasm with which this book has been received in feminist circles is well founded. It is probably the best, most sophisticated anthology on the market, completely worth the high price. The material is uniformly serious and first-rate. It is also fresh; most of the articles were written expressly for this collection. The only reprints are Naomi Weisstein's "Psychology Reconstructs the Female" (a variation of "Kinder, Küche, Kirche as Scientific

Law: Psychology Constructs the Female," available in Sisterhood is Powerful, Women's Liberation and Literature, and elsewhere) and Cynthia Ozick's "Women and Creativity: The Demise of the Dancing Dog," first printed in Mademoiselle and reprinted in the Motive anthology, The New Woman. But both of these pieces are classics.

According to the introduction, the purpose of the book is to demonstrate "that woman's condition...is the result of a slowly formed, deeply entrenched, extraordinarily pervasive cultural (and therefore political) decision that... woman shall remain a person defined not by...her brain or her will or her spirit, but rather by her child-bearing properties and her status as companion to men who make, do, and rule the earth." The cast gathered to rout out institutional sexism is impressive: all of the authors are women, most experienced writers, with a heavy representation of scholars and luminaries--Judith Bardwick, Pauline Bart, Jessie Bernard, Shulamith Firestone, Lucy Komisar, Kate Millett, Elaine Showalter.

The book as a whole is interdisciplinary, and for quick students might well serve as a basic text. The authors, with authority, range over the fields of psychology (Freud and women, depression in middle-aged women, chauvinism in psychiatrists), sociology (unhappy marriage, the image of women in textbooks and the media, the socialization of females, consumerism, women and work), linguistics, literary criticism (the image of women in American fiction), women's liberation. At the least, the pieces are informed and thoughtful; the best ones--Kate Millett on prostitution, Ethel Strainchamps on the sexism inherent in the English language, Elaine Showalter on women writers and the double standard of literary criticism, Linda Nochlin on the scarcity of great women artists, to name a few--are major contributions to the women's studies curriculum.

E.K.

Women's Liberation and Literature, ed. Elaine Showalter. Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1971. $3.50, paper.

The beauty of this anthology is that it does not over-extend itself. The editor has opted for depth rather than variety, fewer long selections rather than a compendium of bits and pieces.

Although there is one section on psychology, most of the (unwitting) contributors to this book are men and women of letters. It opens with excerpts of substantial length from the two most important early feminist works, Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Women and John Stuart Mill's The Subjection of Women. Part 4, on "Women and Psychology," contains three modern commentaries, one Freudian and outrageous (a chapter from Farnham and Lundberg, Modern Woman: The Lost Sex) and two from critics of Freud (Betty Friedan, who impresses renewedly with each acquaintance, and Naomi Weisstein).

The rest of the book is more strictly literary because, as Showalter, a professor of English, writes in the introduction, "The literary professions were the first to be opened to women, [and] the status of the woman writer has long served as an index of a society's view on female abilities and rights."

Part 2, "Literature By and About Women," offers the whole of "A Doll's House" (whereas the impulse in other anthologies has been to include only parts of Act III, leading to Nora's slamming the door). There is poetry by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and one short story each by Dorothy Parker and Mary McCarthy. These are, of course, limited selections, but the instructor could supplement the book with others of her own choosing.

The strongest and most unique contribution of the anthology is Part 3, in the area of literary criticism. George Henry Lewes, writing the essay "The Lady Novelists" in his pre-George Eliot period, examines the reasons why women write differently from (and by implication, not as well as) men. Virginia Woolf (from A Room of One's Own), Mary Ellmann (the extraordinary chapter, "Phallic Criticism," from Thinking About Women) and Hortense Calisher ("No Important Woman Writer") ably answer such male prejudice. An essay by Elizabeth Hardwick ("The Subjection of Women") is a curiously resigned review of Simone de Beauvoir's at times pro-masculine The Second Sex.

The last part of the book takes up the recent Sexual Politics debacle, and includes the chapter from Millett's book, "Theory of Sexual Politics," plus two male reviews, one hostile and threatened, one reservedly friendly.

This anthology is made to order for freshmen humanities classes as well as for courses that are specifically in women's studies. It is a neat, satisfying book, offering uniformly lucid, provocative commentary about a few crucial and intellectually engaging issues.

E.K.

Womankind, ed. Nancy Reeves. Aldine, Atherton, 1971. $12.50, cloth; $4.95, paper.

Nancy Reeves, a lawyer and, as the jacket blurb says, long-time crusader in the field of women's rights, has put together an impressive and ambitious volume, worth considerably more attention than the dearth of publicity about the book would lead one to believe. Womankind is approximately one-third Reeves and two-thirds anthology. The first part consists of her own synthesis of feminist and anti-feminist thought and issues, and it displays a protean intelligence, roaming freely over all the traditional disciplines. The second part of the book, called "Readings in Parallel," provides a program of outside readings, each group of which is correlated with one of the chapters from the beginning.

The organization of the book is somewhat demanding, asking the reader to keep whole chunks of information in her head as she goes back and reads the author's very personal, at times even lyrical interpretation, or vice versa. The actual contents of both parts, and the style of the first, are even more difficult. Reeves is often too much of a conscious writer; there is so much searching for apt metaphors and le mot juste that the message becomes blurred. But she is also, simply, too learned to be easily comprehensible. She writes fiercely opinionated commentary on subjects ranging from women in Greek tragedy to American suffrage, history, religion, Parsonian sociology, English common law, female biology and endocrinology, the imaginative deficiencies of the women's liberation movement. Her footnotes at the end are dizzyingly eclectic.

Characteristically, the readings in the second part of the book are anything but the typical anthology pieces. We touch base with John Stuart Mill, Freud on Mill, Erik Erikson, Margaret Mead. Welcome and unusual entries are Olive Schreiner (the brilliant South African novelist and early feminist, author of Women and Labor) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. But these excerpts are interspersed with heavily academic selections (Thorstein Veblen, Talcott Parsons, Leo Kanowitz, Mirra Komarovsky) and many from obscure authors and journals.

Probably what makes the book finally so difficult but also, it must be pointed out, so interesting, is that Reeves seems to have been a feminist before women's liberation was fashionable. We don't easily connect with her intellectual frame of reference, or with the hard-headed viewpoint which informs the book. Rather than harping on female oppression or sexism as male conspiracy, she emphasizes throughout the deadening, anachronistic nature of myths about women and female roles in an era of cybernetics, population explosion, and ecological destruction. For all of the reasons mentioned, Womankind is not appropriate for the average student. But it is an excellent book.

E.K.

Voices from Women's Liberation, ed. Leslie B. Tanner. New American Library, 1970. $1.50, paper.

The editor began this collection to bring within the same covers papers that had mattered to the Women's Liberation group she belonged to in New York in 1969. There are many familiar pieces here, by Koedt, by Firestone, by Mainardi, by Weisstein, by Willis, available now in other anthologies. There are manifestos, there are reprints of pieces from movement journals, especially from Women: A Journal of Liberation, but also from, for example, Lilith, No More Fun and Games, Rat. Miss America, housework, sexual experience, women studying science, girls in high school, marriage, collectives, are just some of the subjects touched on.

An opening section, much briefer than the sections of movement writing, offers selections from the history of feminism, from Grimké, Stanton, Anthony, Mott, Stone, Weld, and many others. They do not systematically inform, however, because they are quite short, and the same is true of most of the movement pieces. The book is expressive more of enthusiasm (voices, voices, voices, and still more voices) than of precision of intellectual intent. When the "Foreward" says "radical" or "revolutionary," it seems to refer, really, not to a set of principles but to a tone or stance that might more accurately be called just plain militant. For selections from the history of American feminism, Salper would be more useful; for writings from the movement, Sisterhood is Powerful and Notes from the Second Year would better serve as texts.

C.O.

Voices of the New Feminism, ed. Mary Lou Thompson. Beacon Press, 1970. $5.95, cloth; $2.45, paper.

In the "Foreward," the editor states that the writers in this collection "not only build a case of flagrant injustice to girls and women, but most of them propose a number of remedies which seem reasonably available under our present system, if concerned women--and men--demand them." The book offers in generally unremarkable prose an introduction to the situation of contemporary women, in law, in employment, in education, in family life. Although the majority of the essays have not appeared before, the names of the writers are, mostly, familiar, e.g., Betty Friedan, Alice Rossi, Martha Griffiths, Mary Daly, Caroline Bird, Shirley Chisholm.

As the quotation above implies, the prevailing mode of this book is good-mannered and sensible rather than searching or radical: the situation of women is not connected, say, to the fundamental nature of our socio-economic system. The collection is not of sufficient interest in content or stylistically to recommend itself as a text for students, although an instructor relatively new to the women's movement might find it useful as background reading. Put side by side with American Women: The Changing Image (see below), it can serve, too, as proof of the striking shifts in attitudes that have occurred among professional women and among spokesmen for women in the years just past. (American Women: The Changing Image was first put forward in 1962 by the Alliance of Unitarian Women, since merged in the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, which offers the present volume.) The earlier volume was bent, in large part, on faulting women, urging either a greater degree of adjustment on their part or else of effort toward achievement. The new volume squarely acknowledges discrimination against women and urges reforms.

C.O.

American Women: The Changing Image, ed. Beverly Benner Cassara. Beacon Press. $4.95, cloth.

First published in 1962 and printed for the fifth time in 1968, this collection is of interest, not as a text for today, but as a repository of outdated attitudes valuable for research, for contrast with the new attitudes of the 60's and 70's.

Although there are some exceptions, the writers favor the American system as it is and, where women voice discontent or ask for more in the way of achievement or fulfillment, they lay the blame squarely at the feet of women themselves. Says Margaret Mead in the Introduction, "Woman has returned each to her separate cave, waiting anxiously for her separate mate and children to return, guarding her mate jealously against other women, almost totally unaware of any life outside her door." Says Pearl Buck, "Nobody is holding women back except women themselves." Other essayists celebrate the virtues and rewards of child care and of volunteer work. The essays by and large are expressive of the period of reaction. That they issue from active, professional older women of the time, is profoundly illustrative of the power of socialization.

C.O.

The New Woman: A Motive Anthology on Women's Liberation, ed. Joanne Cook, Charlotte Bunch-Weeks, Robin Morgan. Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970. $5.50, cloth; $.95, paper.

Most of the articles in this book have been reprinted from the March-April, 1969 issue of Motive, a publication of the Methodist Student Movement. At the time the magazine appeared it was famous and controversial, about women's liberation yet anticipating by some six months popular awareness of the movement. Now in book form the collection has lost much of its value only because better, more directed anthologies have appeared since.

A large portion is devoted to feminist poems, more valuable for their sentiment than their formal mastery. Probably the most valuable article is by Marlene Dixon, in which she draws comparison between the characteristics ascribed by the majority group to blacks and those ascribed to women (a version of this later appeared in Ramparts). Also included is one of the rare pieces written by a man (Andy Hawley) about the value of women's liberation to men.

The other noteworthy selections appear elsewhere: "The Demise of the Dancing Dog" by Cynthia Ozick (Woman in Sexist Society), "Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female" by Frances M. Beal (The Black Woman), and Naomi Weisstein's paper about the psychology establishment's myths about women, which is ubiquitous.

E.K.

The Other Half: Roads to Women's Equality, ed. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein and William J. Goode. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971. $2.45, paper.

Epstein and Goode are both professors of sociology, and both pros. This book is quiet, competent, factual. Most of the authors represented have an academic interest in women that pre-dates the Movement, and their work is exemplary of the kind of hard research we need, even after partisan fervor dies down.

The editors are clearly most interested in the subjects of women in the work force and women in the home; the dual-role conflict and prospects for an androgynous society. There is an emphasis on cross-cultural family and labor sociology from such names as Epstein and Goode themselves, Jessie Bernard, William H. Whyte, Jr., F. Ivan Nye and Lois Wladis Hoffman, Alice Rossi. Inevitably, many of the articles overlap in content, but not too seriously. Two excellent essays discuss the changing status of women in Cuba and the Soviet Union; Jessie Bernard and Florence A. Ruderman contribute thoughtful if tentative and ideologically conservative pieces about the social implications of biological/sexual differences between men and women.

There are the almost obligatory selections from Lionel Tiger's Men in Groups and from Sexual Politics; and a short excerpt from William O'Neill's history of the American female suffrage movement, Everyone Was Brave, about the failure of the early feminists to maintain anti-domesticity and marriage-reform as an issue.

The Other Half is not politically radical or socially visionary. It is academically respectable, and offers first-rate scholarship.

E.K.

The Woman in America, ed. Robert Jay Lifton. Beacon Press, 1965. $6.95, cloth; $2.95, paper.

This collection has been around for a while; most of the essays in it first appeared in the spring, 1964 issue of Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

This is one anthology which defies general criticism; there is no specific organizing principle or editorial intent. The writers, roughly half male and half female, with a heavy representation from sociologists and more traditional kinds of academics, can only be judged on individual merit. If the book is selected for a text, it will be for certain valuable essays in it which appear nowhere else: Diana Trilling, for example, now by no means a friend to women's liberation, has contributed an excellent essay of literary criticism on "The Image of Women in Contemporary Literature." There is a piece by Erik Erikson on his inner-space/outer-space theories, and David C. McClelland, another Harvard psychologist, provides a good summary of perceptual differences between males and females (although he titles the article. a bit arrogantly, "Wanted: a New Self-Image for Women," and attempts to define and praise his notion of what feminists today are trying to define for themselves, so-called "female culture.") There is an article on Jane Addams and one on Eleanor Roosevelt--quite acceptable American heroines for a Daedalus symposium, but the rewriting of American female history can begin even this modestly.

At any rate, the material is old, and the tone of the collection is traditionally academic and ho-hum liberal. This reviewer was not moved by it, but would refrain from dismissing it entirely.

E.K.

What is Happening to American Women, ed. Anne Firor Scott. SNPA (Southern Newspaper Publishers Association) Foundation Seminar Books, 1970. $2.00, paper.

This is a good, modest anthology that has had a very small distribution, a collection of presentations from a June, 1970 seminar on women held at Duke University by the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association for the edification of southern journalists. The essays are informative rather than original or interpretative and the book is small, only seven essays. But some important basic material is here, given by experts: Joy Osofsky on sex-role socialization, Joyce Ladner on black women and women in poverty, Catherine East on employment, Marlene Dixon on the genesis of the women's liberation movement. As reported in the book, Dixon's talk was interrupted (with her prior permission) by some WITCH guerrilla theater, singing and dancing and the hexing of "those who use a woman's body and her mind" exploitatively. At the end the "witches" each give short personal statements concerning their feelings about themselves as women and experiences with their sisters in the movement.

This book provides a sense of the dynamics operating at a typical conference on women, where different kinds of women and advocates for various programs each claim adherence to the movement. But together the participants in this

conference show concern and respect for women in all life situations. And the book demonstrates that feminism is not only a political program or an intellectual world-view, but a deeply-held personal commitment.

E.K.

The Potential of Woman, ed. Seymour M. Farber and Roger H. L. Wilson. McGraw-Hill, 1963. $2.95, paper.

This collection is a record of a 1963 symposium on women at the University of California, part of a series called, typically, "Man and Civilization." The book has little to recommend it for classroom use--even Marya Mannes speaking about the creative woman is not at her best--but it is interesting to examine what people found to talk about in the early 60's when they conceived of a program on women. There is some blatantly biased speculation about the physiology and psychology of the female, for example, "...the biology of the menstruation process alters and limits women's activities and behavior in ways too multiple to detail here." On the other extreme, there is some heady discussion about women and the existential life situation. But when it comes to considering the real life condition of women, talk often becomes airy, sanguine, benevolent, and, significantly, non-serious. Phrases like "Vive la difference" and "let us be thankful for small favors" occur so often that reading the book leads one to a new appreciation of women's liberation: women will never again allow themselves to be talked about in this way.

E.K.

Sisterhood is Powerful, ed. Robin Morgan. Random House, 1970. $8.95, cloth; $2.45, paper.

Sisterhood is Powerful provides the best answer to the question, "Why are women angry, anyway?" Robin Morgan in this book set about specifically to anthologize articles from the underground press of the women's liberation movement, and while the book is like Sookie Stambler's in that it is most successful as a collection of testimony from radical women, the pieces are untainted by the demands or conventions of the mass media.

The book is a potpourri. There are muckraking articles by women in various professions, by a secretary, a Catholic, a high school student, a lesbian. There are articles about birth control, orgasm, fact and fiction of female sexuality. There are feminist poems and broadsides, "historical documents" (the NOW bill of rights, excerpts from the SCUM manifesto, papers from WITCH and the Redstockings, both now defunct) and some of the more famous writings from the movement (Pat Mainardi's "The Politics of Housework," Roxanne Dunbar's "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution," the first chapter of Kate Millett's Sexual Politics).

Sisterhood is Powerful is in no way a scholarly or even a systematic exploration of the plight of women, but it is great to dip into now and again.

E.K.

Notes From the Second Year, ed. Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt. Radical Feminism (P.O. Box A.A., Old Chelsea Station, New York, New York 10011), 1970. $1.50, paper.

Notes From the Second Year was immediately sold out when it hit the newsstands in New York in 1970, and is now almost as coveted a publication as its underground predecessor, Notes From the First Year (1968). The title, of course, refers to the second year of the organized New Feminist Movement, roughly the period 1969-70: Notes houses under one cover the best articles and theoretical tracts written during that period, until then available only privately and uncertainly from dozens of women's liberation organizations. In appearance, it is a magazine/journal on the order of the short-lived No More Fun and Games (published by "Bread and Roses," a Boston group) or Women: A Journal of Liberation. But in quality Notes compares favorably to the other books reviewed. It can stand, therefore, as a separate anthology.

The editors are also two of the most important analysts of sexism and patriarchy: Firestone is the author of The Dialectic of Sex, Koedt of the widely anthologized article, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm." The introductory editorial describes the spirit behind their writings, and the others in this collection: "In the last two years we have seen the beginning of a much-needed merging of intellect and emotion, thought and sensibility, the personal and the political, all leading to a deep and genuine politics." The articles reflect this ethos, of the woman's consciousness-raising group: that a woman herself, better than any scholar or professional, can judge and describe female experience. The authors present as their credentials only their sex and their anger, their courage to write their "daring to be bad."

Many of the writers and articles appear in other anthologies: Kate Millett on "sexual politics," manifestos from various organizations, Pat Mainardi's "The Politics of Housework," "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," Ellen Willis' "'Consumerism' and Women," Anselma dell'Olio on the New Feminist Theater. Some of the most anti-male militant feminists represented here are not so widely published: Shulamith Firestone on the inability of men to love, Ti-Grace Atkinson, Roxanne Dunbar.

In contents, Notes From the Second Year most resembles Sisterhood is Powerful (the latter is undoubtedly easier to get in large quantities). But in spirit Notes From the Second Year is unique.

E.K.

Women's Liberation: Blueprint for the Future, ed. Sookie Stambler. Ace Books, 1970. $.95, paper.

This is a popular press collection of many of the newspaper and magazine articles about "Women's Lib" which appeared in a rush during the fall of 1970. The book has only the vaguest format; the included articles were probably chosen as much for their availability at the time as for their individual merit. Still, this anthology might be useful in the classroom as a historical document of those palmy days when the new feminism was beginning to come of age and

radical women were writing out of the initial exhuberance of their experiences of conversion. It is the examples of personal testimony that are the most moving: Claudia Dreifus on abortion, Martha Shelley on lesbianism, June Arnold on a consciousness-raising group, Dana Densmore on "woman as sex object." But as a whole it is a weak collection. For personal statements and commentary on the idea of "sisterhood," one might better turn to Notes From the Second Year or Sisterhood is Powerful.

E.K.

The Black Woman, ed. Toni Cade. New American Library, 1970. $.95, paper.

As much as the women's studies curriculum needs information on the neglected and misrepresented subject of the black woman, this book, written entirely by black women, only begins to fill the gap. The essays are valuable in the ways that the determined personalities of the writers come through. As for content, the information is, unfortunately, too often repetitious and predictable. In those essays that do have the black woman as the subject (some are merely black liberation manifestos written by women and one is about "soul food") the message is consistent: anti-Moynihan, flamboyantly anti-capitalist, revolutionary and optimistic. Black is beautiful, black men and women will make the revolution hand in hand. Exceptional pieces are Nikki Giovanni's poems, "Woman Poem" and "Nikki Rosa" and the two short stories; Paule Marshall's "Reena" and Shirley Williams' "Tell Martha Not to Mourn" are powerful portraits of black women, strong, bitter, enduring. They begin to tell the long silent story of the girlchild in the promised land. Also the articles by Toni Cade and Joyce Green are exceptional. (Says Green, "Black men don't have to be the baddest nigger alive in order to be important.")

E.K.

Books not received or not yet available:

Women's Liberation, ed. Michael E. Adelstein and Jean C. Pival. St. Martin's Press, 1972. Table of Contents: Problem: Friedan, Bird; Controversy: Greer, Montagu, Rollin, Mill, Tiger, and others; Solution: Mead, Hobbs, Steinem.

Liberation Now!, ed. Madeline Belkin. Dell, 1971.

Roles Women Play: Readings Toward Women's Liberation, ed. Michele Hoffnung Garskof. Brooks/Cole, 1971.

Handbook of Women's Liberation, ed. Joan Robins. NOW Library Press, 1971.

Production Staff:

Marjorie Johnson, Wesleyan University
Ella Kusnetz, Wesleyan University
Carol Ohmann, Wesleyan University

The MLA Commission on Women:

Sidonie Cassirer, Mount Holyoke College
Mary Anne Ferguson, University of Mass./Boston
Elaine Hedges, Towson State College/Maryland
Nancy Hoffman, Portland State University
Florence Howe, SUNY/College at Old Westbury
Carol Ohmann, Wesleyan University
Elaine Reuben, University of Wisconsin
Elaine Showalter, Douglass College/Rutgers University

FEMALE STUDIES IV

TEACHING ABOUT WOMEN

Prepared for the MLA Commission on the Status of Women.

Editors: Elaine Showalter and Carol Ohmann

The MLA Commission on the Status of Women: Sidonie Cassirer, Mary Anne Ferguson, Elaine Hedges, Nancy Hoffman, Florence Howe, Carol Ohmann, Elaine Reuben, Elaine Showalter

KNOW, INC.
P. O. Box 10197
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232